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VEL MAGAZINE OF TEXA

TEXAS

HIGHWAYS

JULY 1999

\$3.50





From trickling streams in the Llano Estacado west of Lamesa, the Colorado River gains in strength as it etches a life-giving ribbon that snakes 900 river-miles before emptying into Matagorda Bay and the Gulf. In the segment that runs from the meeting place of Burnet, Llano, and San Saba counties then past the Austin city limits lies one of the most-loved stretches of water in Texas.

This month, journalist **Randy Mallory** explores **Lake Travis**, the heart of the so-called Highland Lakes. Randy tells why Central Texans and visitors to the area find Travis such an alluring spot for watersports, camping, dining, sunset-gazing, and enjoying the annual Independence Day fireworks. Photography editor **Michael Murphy**'s images illustrate Lake Travis' charms with color and depth. Since Mike's family moved to the Hill Country more than 30 years ago, he has spent many a day working and relaxing on Lake Travis. As he and millions of others have discovered, the lake lends itself to pursuits both strenuous and serene.

But Travis isn't the only Highland lake worthy of a visit. Over the years, I have enjoyed the distinctive charms of every one of these Lower Colorado River Authority reservoirs. Whether it's eagle or winery tours at Lake Buchanan; camping at Inks Lake; skiing and fishing on Lake LBJ and Lake Marble Falls; sailing on Lake Travis; swimming and skiing on Lake Austin; or canoeing on Town Lake, each link in the Highland chain offers its own array of recreational and re-creative pursuits.

The newest venture of the Lower Colorado River Authority, **Canyon of the Eagles Nature Park**, sits on Lake Buchanan at the northern end of Farm-to-Market Road 1431, west of Burnet and 14 miles north of Texas 29. Managed by Presidian, L.C., a privately funded organization out of San Antonio, the 940-acre park will serve as the new home of the Vanishing Texas River Cruise, the new 64-room Canyon of the Eagles Lodge, and an astronomical observatory that is being built. Although I haven't had a chance to visit the park yet, it sounds outstanding, with hiking and nature trails, a fishing pier, swimming areas, RV and tent campsites, a store with boat rentals, and five miles of lakefront property. Canyon of the Eagles Nature Park is scheduled to open in several phases this

summer, beginning with day and camping facilities on June 28 and a Grand Opening Weekend on July 31-August 1. For lodge and park information, call 800/977-0081.

Just above, you'll notice the seal that touts our having won six International Regional Magazine Association awards this year (for 1998 issues). The accolades include a gold award for best feature photography to **Keith Carter** ("Photographic Alchemy," August); a gold award for best illustration to **Jimmy Longacre** (for the article on John King Fisher in December); a silver award for best special issue to our September issue on Texas Architecture, the brainchild of senior editor **Ann Gallaway**, designed by art director **Jane Wu** and associate art director **Jane Sharpe**; a bronze award for best photojournalism to **Wyman Meinzer** for "Flat Is Where It's At" (December), an idea developed by assistant editor **Marty Lange**; a bronze award for the *Texas Highways* calendar, designed by **Janice McLemore** and overseen by our marketing manager, **Cindy Leffingwell**; and a bronze award for the October, November, and December Window on Texas departments, produced by Mike Murphy and Jane Wu. Of course, putting together *Texas Highways* is a team effort, and my congratulations go to every contributor and member of our multitalented staff.

Remember, readers! This is our **25th year** as the travel magazine of Texas. You won't want to miss our **September issue**. How else will you discover a castle in Texas that looks like it was plucked from Denmark? Want to learn where George Strait heads to get away from it all? Or columnist Liz Smith's greatest Texas memory? Be sure to read our **25th Anniversary Special** in September. In the meantime, turn to the top of the **Letters** department on page 2, where we have a call for your *Texas Highways* memories, and for information on a contest in our upcoming Special Issue.

Jack Lowry

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Texas Highways (ISSN 0040-4349) is published monthly by the Texas Department of Transportation, 150 East Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas 78704. The official travel magazine of Texas encourages recreational travel within the state and tells the Texas story to readers around the world. *Texas Highways* is funded solely through sales of magazines and related products. © Texas Department of Transportation 1999. All rights reserved.



Internet sites: www.texashighways.com; www.traveltexas.com; and www.dot.state.tx.us

The editorial office of *Texas Highways* is at 150 East Riverside Drive in Austin. Call 512/486-5858; fax 512/486-5879. Send queries about manuscripts or photographs to Box 141009, Austin, Texas 78714-1009. We are not responsible for unsolicited materials.

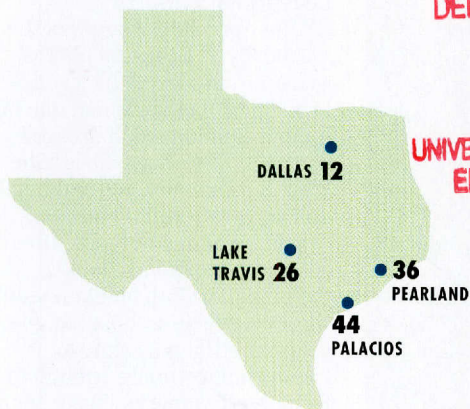
Subscriptions to *Texas Highways* are \$17.50 annually (\$25.50 foreign). Single copies, \$3.50. For subscription services, including ordering, changes of address, and requests to be removed from mailing list sales, write to *Texas Highways* Circulation, Customer Service, Box 149233, Austin, Texas 78714-9233, or call 512/416-3492 or 800/839-4997.

IRMA MEMBER, INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION

PRINTED IN U.S.A. ON RECYCLED PAPER

Periodicals Postage paid at Austin, Texas, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Texas Highways* Circulation, Box 149233, Austin, TX 78714-9233.

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ABOUT OUR COVERS

FRONT—The rockets' red glare lights up the sky over Lake Travis during the Fourth of July Weekend Fireworks Party, hosted annually by Carlos 'N Charlie's, a popular lakeside restaurant. Celebrants find plenty of waterfront viewing spots, but boaters have the best seats in the house. *Photo © Dierk Meyer*

BACK—Like its namesake in southern India, the Sri Meenakshi Temple at Pearland features towers adorned with intricate sculptures. *Photo © Randy Mallory*

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TRUE AND TRIED: CHICKEN-FRIED

by *Damona Benningfield*

It may be a cholesterol bomb, but an occasional crusty chicken-fried steak covered with cream gravy is a Texas tradition most of us refuse to give up



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DART INTO DALLAS

by *Randy Mallory*

If you find driving in Big D daunting, take the city's new electric-powered train instead. DART offers a convenient way to see the sights, and thanks to its art-filled stations, getting there is half the fun



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When Texas Centennial officials called upon her talents in 1936, photographer Polly Smith traveled the state and delivered the goods. Her striking images offer glimpses of another era

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by *Randy Mallory*

One of the nation's largest Hindu temples is just south of Pearland. A spiritual base for many Houston-area Hindus, this magnificent site also welcomes visitors with guided tours and religious festivals

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THE LUTHER HOTEL

by *Gene Fowler*

Built in 1903, the Luther Hotel in Palacios awaits travelers looking for peaceful surroundings. The white, wooden inn's long porch, complete with rocking chairs, fronts the balmy waters of Tres Palacios Bay

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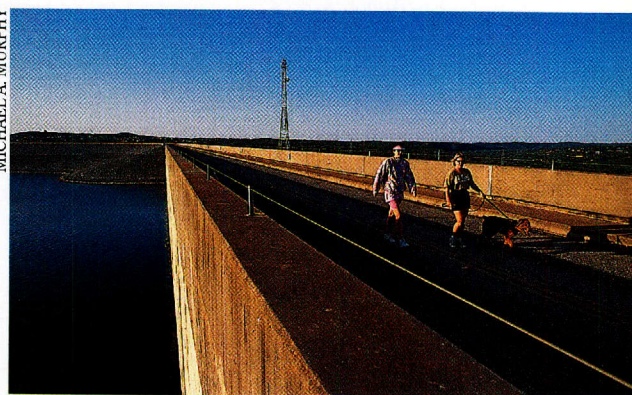
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MICHAEL A. MURPHY



Denise Kornylak, Judy Graci, and Bogey, Judy's dog, take a morning walk on Mansfield Dam, which separates Lake Austin from Lake Travis (see story, page 26).

Readers: Our 25th Anniversary Special Issue is coming up in September, and we want you to be a part of it. If you have a momentous or memorable experience that resulted from reading something in Texas Highways, drop us a line by July 15. We'd like to publish some of your Texas Highways tales in September.

And speaking of the special issue, keep an eye out for the contest page, which will spotlight a photograph and ask you to send in a guess as to where in Texas the photo was taken. From the correct responses, we will draw the lucky winner of a weekend for two in San Antonio. The prize package includes two nights at the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort, dinner atop the Tower of the Americas, and passes to some 14 attractions, including Six Flags Fiesta Texas and the Institute of Texan Cultures. Good luck!

Murphy Phenomenon

I have loved photography all my life, and Mike Murphy's article and photographic samplings [May issue] were magnificent. Also, I agree with his statement that he should indulge his passion for shooting pictures more frequently. He is gifted and has the evidence to prove it.

BILL DOBSON
Houston, via email

I have subscribed to or read *Texas Highways* for over 20 years. This is the first time I've written. No photo in your magazine has ever made me stop dead and exclaim over it as the one by Mike Murphy in May's Window on Texas, page 57. It's awesome!

D. COLLIER
Spring

Regarding the 1975 photo on page 27 of the May issue: The man with the rattlesnake on his head was my dad, Smokey Moore. He was an avid snake hunter and a total outdoorsman. He did it all and lived life to the fullest. He passed away January 18, 1991, so we were really surprised to see the picture of him. Thanks for the memory of that photo.

PATTY LAXSON, via email

The late Smokey Moore, snake hunter and all-around outdoorsman, sits still as a statue while serpents slither.

Remiss with Fort Bliss

What were you thinking? In the May article about [Pershing House], I was shocked and disappointed to read as an example of "tough talk": "Damn it, a fellow took me for a Mex. Had to shoot him three times before he believed I was white." An example of tough talk? How about an example of racial insensitivity, profanity, and loutish behavior? As a Mexican-American, I was appalled to see such a remark in your magazine. The point that you were trying to make could have been done in other ways. I found it ironic that on the same page, the statement appears, "In a world short of role models, we need to take advantage of every opportunity to convey to younger people the sense of pride...that comes with serving the country..."

Yes, every opportunity is right! Too bad the opportunity was taken to include a remark that reeks of bad taste.

BELINDA ELIZONDO, via email

Ed. Note: Thank you for writing, Ms. Elizondo. Writer Blair Case agrees with your assessment of the "swarthy man in Hot Wells." Case included the quote to illustrate the racial and ethnic animosity that reigned along both sides of the Rio Grande at the turn of the century.

More Fort Feedback

I was elated to see the May article on Pershing House. My wife's uncle is a retired Sgt. Major of the Army, and I have toured Fort Bliss with him. It

is a beautiful fort, and the museums are worth the trip.

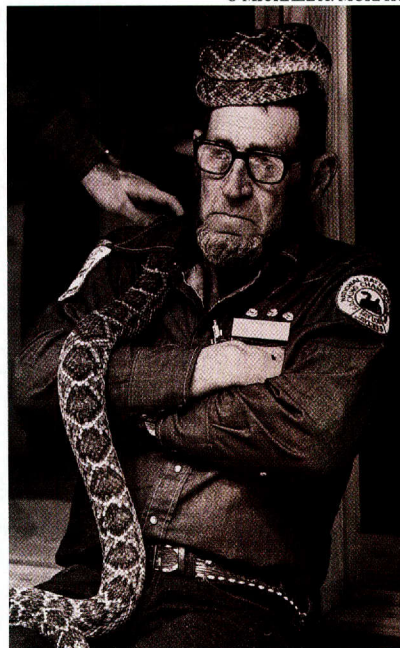
I thought your readers would enjoy knowing that while Patton was stationed at Fort Bliss, history was made. On May 14, 1916, Patton [and his men were] on a patrol in automobiles. They became involved in a firefight with several of Pancho Villa's men, three of whom were killed. This was the first motorized campaign in the history of the U.S. Army.

RICHARD TEAR, via email

May Praise

Thank you for the May articles on Fort Clark and Alamo Village. I lived at Fort Clark from 1956-60, and I cannot think of a better place to grow up. I spent many hours in the pool, and the water never felt cold to me. I have many memories of the movie stars who were there when they filmed *The Alamo* and also *Two Rode Together*, in which I got to be an extra.

MIKE HOLLEY
Denison, via email



© MICHAEL A. MURPHY

Legendary Flowers

The April 1999 issue was the best yet! Beautiful photos, as usual, but I loved the legends. I collect Indian dolls, and one of them is holding a doll dressed in blue. I tell visitors she is "She-Who-is-Alone, who burned her doll and scattered the ashes," as told by Tomie dePaola. [According to dePaola's book], the next morning, bluebonnets were everywhere. I plan to give your beautiful magazine to friends not fortunate enough to be native Texans, as I have been for 80 years.

NINA HONNOL
Houston

We flew into DFW on Easter Sunday and spent the next 10 days driving across Texas. The wildflowers were beautiful on US 377 from Fort Worth to Granbury and on to Comanche. My favorite picture was taken at the Mays Chapel Cemetery, on Texas 16 in Llano County. The little cemetery was solid bluebonnets broken only by the occasional headstone. The sunny, 80-degree days flew by, and we had to return to the chill of a Michigan spring.

MICHAEL HUGGINS
Monroe, Michigan

Readers Down Under

I have been receiving *Texas Highways* for about 14 years as a gift from Mr. and Mrs. C. Richardson of Fort Worth. My sons married Texas girls, thus my love for Texas, a beautiful state. I am originally from New York.

I always look forward to the magazine's arrival—it takes such a long time to reach Australia. When I have finished with it, I take it to our "American" store, which carries all American products, especially those for [making] Tex-Mex food. We have many displaced Texans here, all of them homesick for their Lone Star State. Thank you for giving so many people so much pleasure.

ELLY O'SULLIVAN
Toorak, Victoria, Australia

If you would like to write to *Texas Highways*, the editors would enjoy hearing from you. Though we are unable to print every letter, we just might select yours to appear in the magazine—whether you send us kudos or criticism. We reserve the right to edit letters. Write to Letters Editor, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009, or fax 512/486-5879. Email: editors@texashighways.com.

From the 1920s through the 1950s, some 200 Western pulp magazines thrilled readers around the world with fictionalized stories of the Wild West. One of the more successful pulps was *Texas Rangers*, whose 22-year history began in 1936, soon after the centennial of the founding of the Texas Rangers, the state's legendary law-enforcement organization.

A typical 1947 issue of *Texas Rangers*, which sold for 15 cents, contained a "complete novel," titled *Law on the Winter Range*, a story about fictional lawman Jim Hatfield that accounted for half of the magazine's 110 pages. Jim, the hero of each issue's novel, went by the nickname "Lone Wolf Lawman." Author Jackson Cole—a pseudonym for a stable of Hatfield-story writers—borrowed the moniker from fabled Texas Ranger Manuel T. "Lone Wolf" Gonzauillas (1891-1977).

Besides the novel, the issue offered five short stories (the blurb for "Doc Swap Dupes a Duper" reads, "You can't beat the tradin' hombre when it comes to making a series of swaps"). Ads in the front and back pages hawked everything from Beltone hearing aids and a miniature arc welder to correspondence courses and a free book from the Rosicrucian Brotherhood that would reveal "the forbidden knowledge of Tibet."

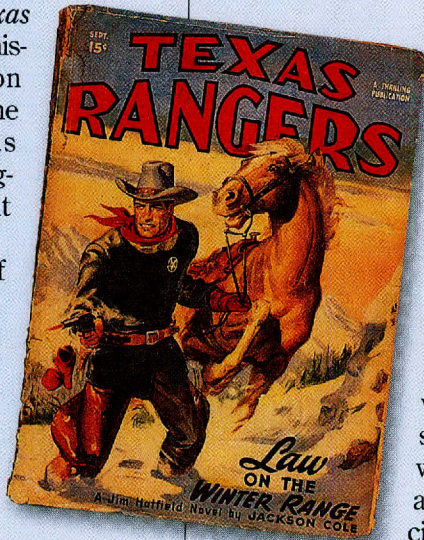
The Western pulps' popularity eventually declined. Faced with World War II paper shortages, competition from comic books and the new paperbacks, and changing public tastes, they took one in the vital organs in the 1950s and, like the unlucky gunman in a shootout, fell, kneeling, and pitched gently into the dust.

—Jim Dinan, *Topsfield, Massachusetts*

Few Texans have managed to squeeze as much living into a long life as Ada Elliott. Born sometime between 1889 and 1892, she moved with

Modestly billing itself "a thrilling publication," *Texas Rangers* gave readers around the world a taste of the Wild West. Pulp magazines got their name from the cheap newsprint they were printed on.

COURTESY JOHN DINAN



her family to Waco from Arkansas in 1900. Five years later, she was performing across the South with a vaudeville troupe. In 1907, she attended Baylor, where she organized a protest to allow a Socialist (who was also a past Baylor presi-

dent) to speak on campus. After a year of college, she taught for a year at Bugscuffle, 20 miles northwest of Waco.

Later, Ada lived in the oil-boom town of Desdemona, also called Hog Town, where she published the *Desdemona Oil News* with her husband, the town mayor. She also found time to travel the state by train, horse, and buggy, stumping for suffrage. Once, when giving "some kind of civil rights talk," as she recalled to a reporter in 1978, a woman in the audience, objecting to something Ada had said, rushed to the podium and slapped her. "I grabbed her hair, and we really went at it," said Ada.

Reportedly, Ada once found herself gambling in a Nogales, Mexico, cantina while Pancho Villa tried his luck at a table nearby. In the 1930s, she acted on Broadway, appearing in *Three Men on a Horse*, *Blind Alley*, *Evening Star*, and other shows. In her later years, with a corn cob pipe in one hand, Ada took up a pen in the other. Her 1977 book, *801—Beans, Potatoes, and Apple Pie*, covers the days when she ran a boarding-house in Dallas (801 was the lodging's street number). In 1978, the year of her last known interview, she was working on two other books, *First Lady of Hog-*

town, about her Desdemona days, and *Hypnosis Opened the Door to Strange Psychic Powers*, about her experiences with medical hypnosis.

—Gene Fowler, *Austin*

Over the last century, an immigrant group with distant roots in India came to Texas, bringing along a rich cultural heritage. They call themselves Rom, a Sanskrit word meaning "men." Most people call them Gypsies.

Their ancestors left India 1,000 years ago to fend off Muslim invaders, but were dispersed and never returned to their homeland. When they migrated to Europe, prejudice against the dark-skinned newcomers kept them on the move for generations. Many were enslaved.

Of the million or so Rom in the United States today, approximately 20,000 live in Texas, especially in Houston and Fort Worth. Representing diverse groups, they speak varying dialects of Romani, a derivative of Sanskrit. Rom often keep their ethnicity secret for fear of discrimination, but they increasingly participate in mainstream society. Yet they still maintain Gypsy tribunal courts, festivals, and churches.

Romani music influenced 19th-Century European composers, particularly Franz Liszt. In this century, Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt influenced such American musicians as blues great B.B. King, guitarist Chet Atkins, and Texas fiddle legend Johnny Gimble. Well-known modern actors of Romani descent include Charlie Chaplin, Rita Hayworth, Yul Brynner, Michael Caine, and Bob Hoskins.

The University of Texas at Austin offers the nation's only course on Romani language, history, and culture, taught by a Romani-Texan, Dr. Ian Hancock, a professor of English, linguistics, and Asian studies and a Romani representative to the United Nations and UNICEF. UT-Austin houses the Texas Romani Archives and the extensive Rupert Croft-Cooke collection of Gypsy-related materials.

—Randy Mallory, *Tyler*

t r u e a n d t r i e d





GENERATIONS
OF TEXANS
HAVE CHOWED
DOWN ON
CHICKEN-FRIED
STEAK

Chicken- fried

BY DAMOND BENNINGFIELD
PHOTOGRAPHS BY J. GRIFFIS SMITH

In tiny Tioga, northeast of Denton, Clark's Outpost draws barbecue fans from all across North Texas, and sometimes far beyond, who smack their lips over slow-smoked brisket and ribs doused with Clark's own special sauce. But visitors with the will power to resist the sweet hickory smoke, to skip the Polish sausage and savory ham, and jump to page two of the menu, will find one of the state's best examples of what some have called "cowboy soul food" and "Texas ambrosia": chicken-fried steak.

A half-pound of top sirloin—pounded thin; coated with flour, a wash of eggs and milk, and more flour; then fried to golden crispness in a cast-iron skillet—spills over the edge of an oval platter. Sawmill gravy, created from a base that resembles a Cajun roux, soaks into the crust. Jalapeño-flavored black-eyed peas and an ear of deep-fried corn flank the chicken-fried (to aficionados, adding "steak" to the name is redundant). And there you have it: a meal that deserves its spot alongside barbecue and Tex-Mex in the pantheon of Great Texas Foods.

No one knows for sure just when chicken-fried steak became a Texas icon. No matter, for today, cafes and diners from Fort Davis to Fort Worth dish up enough chicken-frieds each day to blanket the interior of Texas Stadium, the Astrodome, and the Alamodome combined—with plenty

[FACING PAGE] Move over, chili and 'cue. Chicken-fried steak, with its succulent center, crusty breading, and traditional topping of cream gravy, heads many Texans' list of comfort foods.

FOOD STYLING BY FRAN DECOUX GERLING; PROPS COURTESY CALLAHAN'S GENERAL STORE, AUSTIN



“PART OF THE
JOY OF
CHICKEN-FRIED
STEAK, ALWAYS,
IS THE
AMBIANCE,
THE SETTING,
THE WHOLE
RITUAL.”

left over for a good-size doggie bag. It serves as the main course for civic club lunches and sports banquets, and makes or breaks the reputations of cooks in family kitchens and the toniest big-city restaurants. That's a pretty good record for a dish that gained its popularity during the Depression as a way to stretch a cheap, tough piece of beef into a family-filling meal.

“When I was growing up in East Texas, my mother fixed chicken-fried steak, and it wasn't such a big thing,” says Ann Criswell, author of several cookbooks and food editor of the *Houston Chronicle* for the last 33 years. “Now, it's so ‘Texas.’ Whenever we have somebody in from out of town and want to do something Texan, we do a chicken-fried steak.”

Texas author Larry McMurtry summed up the chicken-fried's importance to Texas culture in “A Look at the Last Frontier,” included in his 1968 book, *In A Narrow Grave: Essays on Texas*. McMurtry was finishing a quick expedition around the state, from Houston south to the Rio Grande Valley and north to the Panhandle. As darkness fell over the plains on the last night of his journey, he headed for the lights of Dalhart.

“It only remained to perform some *acte symbolistique* [sic] to give the drive coherence, tie the present to the past,” he wrote. “I stopped at a cafe in Dalhart and ordered a chicken-fried steak. Only a rank degenerate would drive 1,500 miles across Texas without eating a chicken-fried steak.”



The owner of Clark's Outpost, Nancy Ann Clark (facing page) says the only way to cook chicken-fried steak is in a cast-iron skillet. She should know. Though known as a barbecue spot, the Tioga restaurant serves one of the best chicken-frieds in the state. Accompaniments include sawmill gravy, deep-fried corn-on-the-cob, jalapeño-flavored black-eyed peas, and onion rings. With its down-home decorating, Clark's dining room (above) has the proper ambiance for enjoying CFS (no chandeliers and candlelight, please).

Non-rank degenerates can find chicken-fried steak in other states, of course. But outside the Southwest, odds are pretty good that it's served in a Texas-themed setting, or that the menu describes the entree as “Texas-style.”

“The truth is, other than Oklahoma, I don't think I've ever eaten a really terrific chicken-fried steak outside Texas,” says author Michael Stern. Together with Jane Stern, his wife and co-author, Michael searches America's highways and backroads for the country's best diners, cafes, drive-ins, and other icons of Americana for books

and a monthly “Two for the Road” column in *Gourmet* magazine.

Many non-Texans treat a chicken-fried the same way most of us treat a plate of hummus or escargots—with concerned curiosity. “People who didn't grow up in Texas believe that chicken-fried steak is a put-on, like those jackalope trophies you see in roadside souvenir shops,” wrote Gary Cartwright in a 1983 *Texas Monthly* article.

“The funniest thing about it is watching people from the north who have never heard of chicken-fried steak,” says Bobby Lee, a co-owner of the Big Texan Steak Ranch in Amarillo, which serves

more than 20,000 chicken-frieds a year. “They hear somebody say ‘chicken-fried steak,’ and you have to explain what it is: a piece of steak prepared like fried chicken. A few ask for it medium-rare, and you have to explain that it just doesn't work that way.”

Northerners may lack familiarity with chicken-fried steak because the dish almost certainly was born in Texas. There's



MICHAEL A. MURPHY

Broken Spoke's Chicken-Fried Steak

Aclaimed by CFS aficionados for decades, the Broken Spoke's version of the Lone Star classic went public in 1994, when co-owner James White (above) released the recipe in honor of the Austin dance hall's 30th anniversary. Co-owner Annetta White, James' wife, says the following adaptation reflects the Spoke's tradition of hand-breading each steak and cooking everything fresh, when ordered.

1 large egg
 1 c. buttermilk
 salt to taste
 pepper to taste
 ½ c. flour
 ½ c. cracker meal
 1 (3- to 5-oz.) beef cutlet, hand-tenderized
 vegetable shortening

Whip together egg, buttermilk, salt, and pepper in a large bowl; set batter aside.

Blend together flour and cracker meal in another bowl. Place cutlet in mixture, and cover both sides well. Submerge the cutlet in the egg batter, then place it back in the flour mixture, patting both sides again evenly to coat.

Melt shortening in a deep fryer (or cast-iron skillet), and heat to 325°. Place cutlet in fryer, and fry until it floats and turns golden. Remove steak from fryer;

drain well, reserving ½ c. drippings for gravy, if desired. Place steak on plate, and keep warm while preparing Cream Gravy. Spoon gravy generously over steak.

Cream Gravy

½ c. shortening or reserved drippings
 ¼ c. flour
 1 qt. milk
 salt to taste
 pepper to taste

Place shortening in a 10- to 12-inch cast-iron skillet, and heat until hot. Gradually add flour, and cook over low heat until mixture turns brown, stirring constantly to prevent scorching. Add remaining ingredients, and cook, stirring constantly until thick. If gravy gets too thick, thin to desired consistency with water.

Note: This recipe makes enough gravy for 4 steaks.

Braunfels, Fredericksburg, and other Central Texas towns.

Others, though, believe that chicken-fried was born on Texas ranches and cattle trails, where wives and chuck-wagon cooks tried to satisfy big appetites with a few basic ingredients, including beef, flour, and beef tallow, a substitute for lard and butter. "Inside houses, more beef was eaten fried than any other way," wrote legendary Texas author and teacher J. Frank Dobie in *The Longhorns*. "Some flour, fried in melted tallow, peppered and diluted with water, resulted in a gravy good enough to make a fellow want to whip his own grandmammy."

Rich, peppery gravy is one of the keys to a successful chicken-fried. But the most important ingredient, of course, is the right beef. Although some restaurants serve tenderloin, most authors and chefs recommend a more modest cut, like round steak, pounded into tender submission.

"One of the real secrets is bad beef," says Michael Stern. "Not *spoiled* beef," he explains, "but you need a cut with character and chew to it. A lot of people use machine-tenderized cube steaks, but the best are hand-tenderized. The traditional way to tenderize it is to pound the hell out of it with an old-fashioned Coke bottle."

probably no truth to the legend that credits its invention to a hurried Texas cook, however. According to the tale, a waitress yelled out an order for "chicken, fried steak!" She wanted two separate dishes, but the inexperienced cook thought it was a single item. Not wanting to look ignorant of his craft, he improvised, dredging a piece of beef in the fried-chicken batter and frying it to the same golden brown.

Instead, some food experts say the dish evolved from the Wiener schnitzel prepared by German immigrants to New

Once the beef is tenderized, dredge it in flour, plain or seasoned (legendary Louisiana chef Paul Prudhomme adds ground chilies, paprika, and onion powder), dip it in a wash of plain whole milk or a mixture of milk or buttermilk and eggs, and then dredge it in more flour. Nontraditionalists sometimes coat the

[FACING PAGE] Joe Duncan, owner of The Hotel Limpia in Fort Davis, prepares to tuck into one of the hotel restaurant's famous chicken-frieds. It may look the same as other CFSs, but the Limpia's version is made with beef tenderloin. Flaky buttermilk-and-honey biscuits also star on the menu.





Not all chicken-frieds are traditional. Rudi Lechner's Restaurant in Houston serves an Austrian version of CFS that eschews cream gravy in favor of cheese sauce.

steak with cracker crumbs, and Frito-Lay publishes a recipe for chicken-fried steak coated with crushed corn chips.

Variations on the basic chicken-fried abound. Rudi Lechner's Restaurant in Houston serves an Austrian version stuffed with Swiss cheese and optional jalapeños and topped with a cheese sauce. The Big Texan's Red Top Chicken-Fried Steak is smothered in chili and cheese. And many a Tex-Mex restaurant offers a chicken-fried steak covered with chile con queso.

Many restaurants deep-fry their steaks to cut the cooking time, but purists insist the only way to cook a chicken-fried is in a cast-iron skillet. "The beef deteriorates in a fryer," says Nancy Ann Clark, owner of Clark's Outpost. "A skillet is the old-fashioned way, like in mama's kitchen. That's the best way to do it. It's called TLC."

Skillet preparation provides a distinct advantage: You can prepare the gravy in the same pan, using the residue of crunchy, almost-black bits of fried batter to add both flavor and texture.

With steak and gravy prepared to perfection, diners face a potentially difficult choice: What should cover the other half of the plate?

Mashed potatoes smothered with gravy is almost a no-brainer, especially when you're eating at home. So is a platter of hot biscuits. (At the Hotel Limpia Dining Room in Fort Davis, where the CFS is made with pounded beef tenderloin, the baker offers trays of fresh-from-the-kitchen buttermilk-and-honey biscuits to the diners every few minutes. "A lot of times, the baker doesn't even make it to the back of the room before they're all gone," says owner Joe Duncan.) After that, the options pile up, especially at home-cooking-style cafes: fresh-snapped green beans, fried okra, collard or turnip greens, and a whole grocery list of others.

That leaves one final question: Where should you go to find a good Texas chicken-fried? In *The Genuine Texas Handbook*, author Rosemary Kent offers a guideline: "Genuine chicken-fried steak should never be served dolled up on china plates or in a fancy setting."

"Part of the joy of chicken-fried steak, always, is the ambiance, the setting, the whole ritual," says

Michael Stern. "To eat a chicken-fried steak on a white linen tablecloth with candles and fine wine is as ludicrous as drinking that wine out of a tin cup.

"You need a cafe-roadhouse-diner atmosphere," Michael says. "Threadgill's in Austin has the right attitude. So does the O.S.T. in Bandera. It has a stupendously good chicken-fried steak, and it's a great town cafe. It's just the place where people in town come to eat."

Dozens of other restaurants fit that description, in cities and small towns alike. Clark's Outpost certainly qualifies. So do the Elite Cafe in Waco, where you can cut the chicken-fried with a fork, and black-and-white photos of the restaurant and two former locations decorate the walls; Schobels', which sits beneath a towering oak just off Interstate 10 in Columbus; and Earl Abel's, a 66-year-old restaurant on Broadway in San Antonio, where the waitresses know most of the regular customers by name.

And there's the Paris Coffee Shop, south of downtown in Fort Worth, home of one of the most popular chicken-frieds in a city still known as "Cowtown." By 11:30 on a weekday morning, the line of customers waiting for a table stretches 30 deep,

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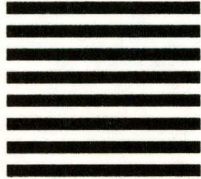
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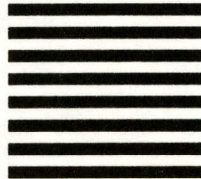
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Chicken-Fried Steak

If you'd like to do more research on CFS (and who wouldn't?), a good place to start is in your own kitchen. Using the Broken Spoke's recipe on page 8, even a novice can turn out a palate-pleasing platter of this popular Texas dish.

Restaurants

Lucky for non-cooks, hundreds of Lone Star restaurants serve up good chicken-fried steak. Here are details on the restaurants mentioned in this article. All sites are wheelchair accessible unless otherwise noted.

Big Texan Steak Ranch is at 7701 Interstate 40 East in Amarillo. Hours: Daily 10:30-10:30. Web site: www.amaonline.com/bigtexan. Call 806/372-6000.

Broken Spoke, at 3201 S. Lamar in Austin, is one of Texas' most legendary dance halls, and it's also famous for its chicken-fried steak. Restaurant hours: Tue-Thu 10:30-10:30, Fri-Sat 10:30 a.m.-11:30 p.m. Web site: www.lonestar.net/bspoke. Call 512/442-6189.

Clark's Outpost is at 101 US 377 (at the intersection with Gene Autry Dr.) in Tioga. Hours: Mon-Thu 11-9, Fri-Sat 11-9:30, Sun 11-8:30. Call 940/437-2414.

Earl Abel's, a San Antonio institution, is at 4200 Broadway (Broadway and Hildebrand),

across the street from Incarnate Word College near the San Antonio Zoo. Hours: 6:30 a.m.-1 a.m. daily. Call 210/822-3358.

The Hotel Limpia Dining Room is next to the restored Hotel Limpia and across the street from the Jeff Davis County courthouse. Hours: Tue-Sun 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and 5:30-9:30 p.m. Restrooms not wheelchair accessible. Web site: www.hotellimpia.com. Call 915/426-3241.

O.S.T. (Old Spanish Trail), at 305 Main St. in Bandera, was founded in 1921, making it the oldest continuously operated restaurant in Bandera County. Hours: Mon-Thu 6 a.m.-11 p.m., Fri-Sat 6 a.m.-midnight, Sun 7 a.m.-10 p.m. Call 830/796-3836.

Paris Coffee Shop, at 704 W. Magnolia in Fort Worth, is known for its "grill-fried" version of chicken-fried steak, its chicken and dumplings, and other home-style dishes, including made-from-scratch pies (coconut and chocolate available daily). Hours: Mon-Fri 6 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Sat 6 a.m.-11 a.m. (breakfast only). Call 817/335-2041.

Rudi Lechner's Restaurant, at 2503 S. Gessner in Houston, offers an Austrian chuck wagon-meets-cordon bleu version of chicken-fried steak. Hours: Mon-Sat 11:30-10, Sun 11:30-9. Call 713/782-1180.

Schobels' is about 1½ blocks north of I-10, at 2020 Milam St. in Columbus. Hours: Sun-Thu 6 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri-Sat 6 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Call 409/732-2385.

Threadgill's, one of Austin's most popular down-home restaurants, has two locations. The original is at 6416 N. Lamar Blvd.; 512/451-5440. Threadgill's World Headquarters, on the site of the old Armadillo World Headquarters, is at 301 W. Riverside Dr.; 512/472-9304. Both restaurants open Mon-Sat 11-10, Sun 11-9. Web site: www.threadgills.com.

In decades past, just getting to the **Waco Elite Cafe**, at 2132 S. Valley Mills Dr. (on the infamous "circle" south of downtown Waco), was something of an adventure. Today, with I-35 running past the cafe, it's easier to get there. Hours: Sun-Thu 7 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri-Sat 7 a.m.-11 p.m. Call 254/754-4941.

Books

Look for the following books in your local library or bookstore:

Eat Your Way Across the U.S.A. by Jane and Michael Stern (Broadway Books, 1999) serves as "a guidebook to 500 diners, farmland buffets, lobster shacks, pie palaces, and other all-American eateries," including several in Texas.

Texas Home Cooking by Cheryl Alters Jamison and Bill Jamison

(Harvard Common Press, 1993) includes an extensive section on chicken-fried steak history and preparation, with traditional and nontraditional recipes.

Texas: The Newest, the Biggest, the Most Complete Guide to All of Texas by Robert R. Rafferty (Texas Monthly Press, 1989) lists restaurants, attractions, events, and other tidbits for most towns in Texas.

Texas by Dick J. Reavis (Compass American Guides, 1997) makes special mention of several top chicken-fried-steak restaurants.

The Genuine Texas Handbook by Rosemary Kent (Workman Publishing, 1981) includes a section on Texas cooking, with special emphasis on barbecue, Tex-Mex, and chicken-fried steak.

The Hotel Limpia Cookbook (\$18.95, plus postage, tax, and handling) includes the recipe for the hotel's famous Chicken-Fried Beef Tenderloin. To order the cookbook, call the hotel, access its Web site, or write to Box 1341, Fort Davis 79734.

Threadgill's: The Cookbook (\$21.95, plus postage, tax, and handling) includes the restaurant's recipe for chicken-fried steak. To order the cookbook, call either location, access the Web site, or write to 6416 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin 78752.



Customers at the Waco Elite Cafe have clamored for chicken-fried steak since the cafe opened in 1941.

dividing the counter from the rest of the large, square dining room. Chicken-fried steak and other lunch specials fill partitioned plastic plates, which keep the juice from the greens and black-eyed peas from slopping onto the steak and the caramel-colored french fries.

Or, if all else fails, take another cue from *The Genuine Texas Handbook*: "... for all its popularity at truck stops on the Interstate—the best chicken-fried steak is still what a Texas mama makes at home." ★

Austin freelancer DAMOND BENNINGFIELD, who thinks first-rate gravy should be a prerequisite for chicken-fried-steak restaurants, declares both the sawmill gravy and the steak at Clark's Outpost tops.

Staff photographer J. GRIFFIS SMITH recently shot a story on moon-gazing, which will run in next month's issue.

PROVIDING
EASY ACCESS
TO BIG D
ATTRACTIONS,
DALLAS AREA
RAPID TRANSIT
IS LIGHT RAILS
AHEAD

DART

**TO
THE
FUTURE**





BY RANDY MALLORY • PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMIE WILLIAMS

DALLAS

Just like clockwork, the electric-powered train eases into the downtown station right on time. A mélange of fellow travelers exits the streamlined cars and spills onto the platform. Suited executives and shirt-sleeved blue-collar workers stride away purposefully. A schoolteacher herds her charges toward a nearby art museum. Vacationers casually consult maps, then mosey off to the zoo, historic sites, shops, and restaurants.

This scene sounds like the end of a jaunt on some legendary European train...or even a big-city stop on some subway “back East.” Well—whoo, whoo, whoooo—how about a ride through Big D, that increasingly rail-savvy metropolis on the North Texas prairie!

Sure, Dallasites’ collective love of the automobile still stirs passions. But since mid-1997, when Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) completed the first 20 miles of an almost \$860 million light-rail system, locals and visitors alike have discovered the pleasures of doing Dallas by DART...sans traffic snarls and parking hassles. For commuters, light rail offers fast, affordable, low-polluting transportation to work. For visitors, it invites a new way to take in popular downtown and outlying destinations. And, as some 40,000 passengers each weekday and 30,000 on weekends have learned, riding DART is just plain fun.

“It’s a real joy,” says Greg Elam of the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau, “and, frankly, even though the system was built to benefit commuters, we’re amazed how convenient and delightful it’s been for our visitors.”

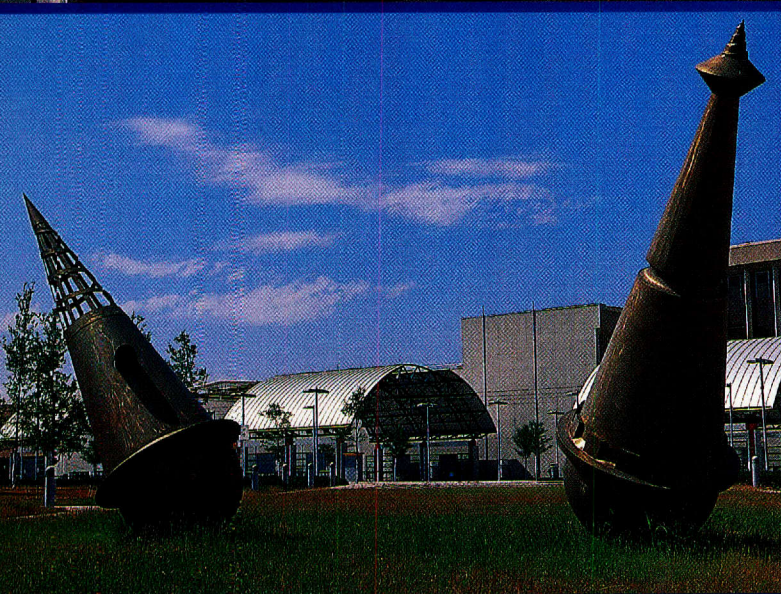
Dallas brandishes bragging rights as home of the Southwest’s first light-rail system. But a ramble on an electric-powered train is hardly new here. Electric trolleys crisscrossed downtown and the city’s east side as early as 1889, says John J. Myers, author of *Texas Electric Railway*. After the turn of the century, electric interurban trains (particularly the Texas Electric Railway) connected local trolley lines with those of nearby towns such as Sherman and Corsicana and went as far south as Waco. Yielding to burgeoning bus service, interurbans stopped running in 1948 and trolleys the year after.

Half a century later, Dallas’ electric rail reincarnation glides along seamless steel rails (no clickety-clack) on two lines. The Red Line connects bustling north Dallas, via downtown, to neighborhoods south of the Trinity River in West Oak Cliff. The Blue Line links downtown to neighborhoods in South Oak Cliff. Work has begun to extend DART rail service to suburban Garland and Richardson (in 2002) and Plano (in 2003).

Each of DART’s double-ended light-rail cars carries 160 passengers (76 seated) and averages 25-30 mph (with a top speed

[FACING PAGE] Park your car, and do Big D by DART—Dallas Area Rapid Transit, that is. An alternative to vehicular gridlock, the modern-day trolley (shown here at the Dallas Zoo stop) whisks riders to stations near popular destinations.

[TOP] A sunflower clock sculpture by artist Michael Brown sprouts out of the ground at DART’s Pearl Station, the northernmost stop along the downtown transit-way mall.



PHOTOS THIS PAGE COURTESY DART, RITCHIE McHAM

of 65 mph over the Trinity River and through the 3.5-mile subway beneath North Central Expressway). This high-tech, climate-controlled trolley rolls out a new look and feel to downtown. That's most evident at the mile-long transit-way mall, which spans four stations—Pearl, St. Paul, Akard, and West End—along Bryan and Pacific streets (the latter street follows the route of Dallas' first main-line train, the 1870s Texas & Pacific Railroad). Surfaced with colored concrete pavers and lined with trees, the open-air mall's wide sidewalks transform the business district's back streets into an urban promenade.

An array of destinations lies a short walk from the rail mall: from **Pearl Station**, the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, home of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra; from **St. Paul Station**, the Dallas Museum of Art and the landmark Majestic Theater; from **Akard Station**, Neiman Marcus' famed flagship store and

Thanks-Giving Square, an urban park with a waterfall and an interfaith chapel. Likewise, the **West End Station** serves as a gateway to popular sites: the lively entertainment and eating mecca of West End MarketPlace, the solemn Sixth Floor Museum and John F. Kennedy Memorial, and the historic John Neely Bryan Cabin and 1892 "Old Red" Courthouse.

South of the West End Station, DART's **Union Station** stop puts sports fans steps away from games at Reunion Arena. It also deposits tourists eager for a lofty, 360-degree city view near the 50-story Reunion Tower, with its observation deck and rotating lounge. Right across the tracks, Amtrak's long-distance passenger service awaits at the renovated 1916 Union Station, which features restored tile floors and wooden benches.

Conventioneers especially thrive on DART service. From **Convention Center Station**, out-of-towners are just minutes by train

[ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT] At the 8th & Corinth Station, a tile mural by Johnice I. Parker depicts a jazz-club scene from the nearby Tenth Street Historic District, Dallas' oldest African-American community. Pillars tiled in exotic patterns at the Dallas Zoo Station remind riders where the wild things are. Created by Tom Stancliffe, the conical, bronze structures at Cedars Station celebrate the cedar forest that once spread across this landscape.

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IN ITSELF.



from downtown's dozen or so hotels, as well as the West End and its cornucopia of food, libations, music, museums, and shops. In the fall of 1998, the Adam's Mark Hotel completed the conversion of three 1950s skyscrapers into a 1,844-room hotel complex (the state's largest), to take advantage of the convention-friendly light-rail service. "We wanted to be right on the line, because we knew it would be a wonderful way for conventioners and other guests to get around," says the hotel's senior vice president, Stan Soroka.

The train from Convention Center Station also whisks visitors to **Park Lane Station**, where an easy—and free—trolley-bus connection puts them deep into mega-shopping at NorthPark Center.

South of downtown, where the Red and Blue lines cross the Trinity River, the famous Dallas skyline—complete with the sphere-tipped Reunion Tower—opens up, a sight particularly dazzling at night. The Red Line continues to the **Dallas Zoo Station**. Attendance at the zoo is up, at least in part because of the new light-rail stop, which sits across the street from the

animal kingdom's redesigned eastern entrance. Colored mosaic tiles on the station's platform columns look like skin markings of giraffes, leopards, tigers, and zebras. The station's steel-panel guardrails sport laser-cut patterns of zoo animals and African Ndebele tribal designs.

It's all part of what DART calls "the largest public art project in Texas." Through a blend of art and architecture, each light-rail stop characterizes its surrounding community. A committee of locals provided input and helped select the commissioned "objets D'ART."

[TOP AND BOTTOM] Westmoreland Station honors the area's Hispanic heritage with brightly tiled columns and artist Roberto Mungia's 10 windscreen panels, which portray Mexican culture and mythology. Also at Westmoreland, the *Cycles of Life* sculpture, by Eliseo Garcia, shows a winged figure and four bas-reliefs atop a foundation reminiscent of a Mayan pyramid.

These works—easily seen from the rail cars—make a ride on DART an attraction in itself. For example, at the **8th & Corinth Station**, murals made from hand-painted tiles depict landmarks and pastimes in the nearby Tenth Street Historic District, the city's oldest African-American community. One tiled panel shows men playing a round of dominoes at a folding table under a shade tree.

At **Westmoreland Station**, windscreen panels portray Mexican culture and mythology. One of the panels renders in vivid colors the spired cathedral and downtown plaza of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Also at Westmoreland, a winged figure, symbolizing the community's hope for the future, sits atop a foundation reminiscent of a Mayan pyramid. The entire limestone sculpture rises 21 feet.

Hampton Station features cast-stone columns with images of the flora and fauna of neighboring Elmwood Creek, as well as a walkway peppered with verses written by the late blues legend Stevie Ray Vaughan, who grew up nearby. **Cedars Station** displays giant bronze cones, tree-like reminders of the vast cedar forest that once graced this landscape.

Back at Convention Center Station, rail riders on their way to meetings can follow the red handrails and support girders, which visually lead them from the platform into the convention center. Overhead, green neon lights move in arcs across the ceiling above an illuminated photographic mural embedded in the concrete floor. The mural shows an armillary sphere, an ancient astronomical instrument, mixed with a col-



At Union Station, near Reunion Tower, DART riders can make Amtrak connections or hop aboard the Trinity Railway Express, a commuter train between Dallas and Irving.

Among the more popular DART stops, West End Station lies near the hoppin' West End MarketPlace, with its dozens of restaurants, clubs, and boutiques.

lage of images, including an 1872 lithographic map of Dallas, a Tejas Indian warrior, and Pegasus, the flying red horse, which graces the top of the Magnolia Building downtown (formerly the Mobil Oil Building). This dramatic photomural melds Dallas' rich heritage with its emerging status as one of the Southwest's busiest cities.

Indeed, after riding the city's brand-spanking-new electric trains, you might think you were in Boston or Baltimore...or even Dublin or Dusseldorf. Local choo-choo converts won't mind the confusion...as long as you promise to spread the word about doing Dallas by DART. ★

Prolific freelancer RANDY MALLORY of Tyler also wrote and provided photos for this issue's stories on Lake Travis and the Sri Meenakshi Temple in Pearland.

Photographer JAMIE WILLIAMS lives in Dallas. This is her first feature assignment for *Texas Highways*.

Light-Rail Rambling

Do Dallas from a different point of view...from the window-side seat of a streamlined train. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) so far has 20 miles of track and 20 rail stations on two lines—the Red Line and the Blue Line. The Red Line travels from Park Lane in north Dallas—near Loop 12 (Northwest Hwy.) and US 75 (North Central Expwy.)—via downtown to Westmoreland Rd. in West Oak Cliff, near I-20. The Blue Line goes from downtown to Lancaster Rd., at Loop 12 in South Oak Cliff. Eight stations have free parking. Each station features unusual art and architecture designed to reflect the surrounding neighborhood.

Both lines stop at the 6 downtown stations, which offer access within walking distance (well under a half-mile) to the following destinations, listed below in station order from north to south. Take along a Dallas street map to help locate your destination after you leave the rail station. *Note: All stations and rail cars are wheelchair accessible. All area codes are 214.*

Pearl Station

(Bryan St., east of Pearl St.)

Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center (2301 Flora St., 670-3600), **Adam's Mark Hotel** (400 N. Olive St., 922-8000), **Le Meridien Hotel** (650 N. Pearl St., 979-9000 or 800/543-4300), **Plaza of the Americas** (shops, restaurants, and ice skating at 700 N. Pearl St., 720-8000).

St. Paul Station

(Bryan St., between St. Paul and Harwood)

Dallas Museum of Art (1717 N. Harwood, 922-1200), **Trammell Crow Center Sculpture Garden** (2001 Ross Ave., 979-6100), **Majestic Theater** (1925 Elm St., 880-0137). For an extra rail treat, walk 4 blocks from the St. Paul Station to Ross and St. Paul, and connect with the non-DART **McKinney Avenue Trolley** (3153 Oak Grove, 855-0006). Ride this electric streetcar to numerous McKinney Ave. shops and restaurants, including the **Hard Rock Cafe** (2601 McKinney Ave., 855-0007).

Both lines stop at the 6 downtown stations, which offer access within walking distance (well under a half-mile) to the following destinations, listed below in station order from north to south.

Akard Station

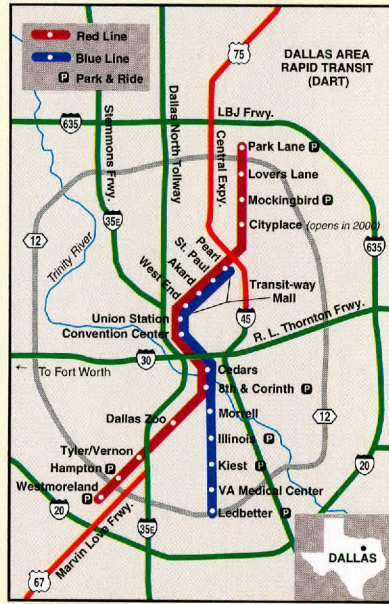
(Pacific Ave., between Akard and Field)

Fairmont Hotel (1717 N. Akard, 720-2020 or 800/527-4272), **Pegasus Plaza** (an urban park at Main and Akard), **Neiman Marcus** flagship store (1618 Main St., 741-6911), **Dallas Grand Hotel** (1914 Commerce St., 747-7000 or 800/421-0011), **Hotel Adolphus** (1321 Commerce St., 742-8200), **Fountain Place Water Gardens** (1445 Ross Ave. at Field St., 855-7766), **Thanks-Giving Square** (bounded by Akard, Bryan, Pacific, and Ervay, 969-1977), **DART Headquarters and Store** (1401 Pacific Ave., 979-1111).

West End Station

(Pacific Ave., between Market and Lamar)

West End MarketPlace (Market at Munger, 748-4801; includes **Planet Hollywood**, 749-7827), **The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza** (411 Elm St., 747-6660), **John F. Kennedy Memorial Plaza** (at Main and Market), **Dallas World Aquarium** (1801 N. Griffin St., 720-2224), **John Neely Bryan Cabin** (Main and Record), **"Old Red" Courthouse** (Main and Houston), now home of a new Dallas Convention & Visitors



© KELLEYGRAPHICS

Bureau Visitor Information Center (see TexCetera, page 56), 571-1300.

Union Station

(Houston St., between Wood and Young)

Paramount Hotel (302 S. Houston St., 761-9090), **Hyatt Regency/Reunion Tower** (300 Reunion Blvd., 651-1234; you can go to the top Sun-Thu 10-10, Fri-Sat 10 a.m.-midnight), **Reunion Arena** (777 Sports St., 939-2770), **Union Station** (400 S. Houston St., 653-1101, with Amtrak connections).

Convention Center Station

(Memorial Dr. and Lamar)

Dallas Convention Center (650 S. Griffin St., 939-2700), **Pioneer Plaza** (Young and Griffin; site of 40 bronze Texas Longhorns comprising the world's largest bronze monument; see "Trailblazers in Bronze," Jan. 1997).

The Red Line's northern terminus is at Park Lane Station (Park Lane and Greenville Ave.). From



COURTESY DART RICHIE MCFARLAND

Bricks etched with wild words decorate the floor of the Dallas Zoo Station.

there, you can walk to Greenville Ave. eateries or hop on a free DART retro-style trolleybus to mega-shopping at **NorthPark Center** (Northwest Hwy. and N. Central Expwy., 363-7441). You can also take the Red Line to the Dallas Zoo Station (Ewing Ave. and Clarendon Dr.), at the eastern entrance to the **Dallas Zoo** (main entrance is at 650 South R.L. Thornton Frwy., 670-5656).

Tickets/Fares/Schedules

DART trains run daily 5:30 a.m.-12:30 a.m. Downtown trains stop every 5 min. during peak hours (6-9 a.m. and 4-7 p.m.) Mon-Fri and every 10 min. otherwise. Outside the 6 downtown stations, trains stop every 10 min. during peak hours Mon-Fri and every 20 min. otherwise.

Tickets are sold in vending machines at all 20 stations. One-way tickets: \$1, 50¢ age 65 and older, ages 5-11, and disabled; free age 4 and younger. Many visitors prefer the day pass (\$2 and \$1) for 24 hours of unlimited rides, transferable to buses as well. For passes by mail, call 754-0182. (You can travel between the 6 downtown stations for up to 90 min. for only 50¢.) Bus transfer slips are also good for rail travel in any direction for up to 90 min. Two bus transfer centers, at opposite ends of downtown, switch rail passengers to and from bus connections.

Rail riding is on the honor system, but uniformed DART police make random ticket inspections. A system map is located at each

station and on each rail car. Destination signs at stations (and on the front of each train) show which trains operate on which tracks. Be courteous, and let exiting passengers get off before you board. Trains stop briefly at all stations.

For free maps, schedules, and fare information

before you arrive, write to DART, 1401 Pacific Ave., Dallas 75266; call 979-1111, Mon-Fri 5 a.m.-10 p.m. and Sat-Sun 8-6. On the Internet, check out DART's Web site (www.dart.org); select the light-rail map, and click on each station for nearby destinations and other details. DART can also provide information on its Trinity Railway Express commuter train between downtown Dallas and Irving.

e x t r a o r d i n a r y

Views

P O L L Y S M I T H A N D

T H E T E X A S C E N T E N N I A L

by Evelyn Barker

In 1936, Texas looked toward a future filled with promise. Not only did cattle roam the state's farthest reaches, but cotton reigned supreme, and oil gushed by the barrelful. It was time to let the world know that Texas was more than just cowboys and cactus. The 100th anniversary of Texas' independence from Mexico seemed like the perfect promotional opportunity.

The state planned a grand celebration for the historic milestone and called it the Texas Centennial Central Exposition. Centered at Dallas' newly revamped Fair Park, the six-month event showcased art, architecture, and Texas history. Two publicity offices—one in Dallas and one in New York—saturated newspapers and magazines nationwide with articles and photographs about Texas and the celebration. As part of this effort, the Centennial's promotional staff commissioned 27-year-old Polly Smith to travel across the state and tell the story of Texas through pictures.

Magnolia Petroleum Company, Dallas (note famed "Flying Red Horse" atop the building)



Born in Ruston, Louisiana, on December 29, 1908, Frances Sutah Smith—called Polly, from a favorite lullaby—became interested in photography as a teenager in Austin. After graduating from high school, she traveled to New York to study with famed photographer Edward Steichen. She completed a brief, informal internship with him, then began working as a freelance photographer.

In 1935, Polly's work attracted the notice of Centennial officials, and they promptly hired her for \$35 a week. They gave her a long list of photo assignments: pioneer cabins, cattle ranching, citrus fruit harvesting, drilling for oil, university students, and horse racing, among others. A note added at the bottom of the list indicates that Texas had already moved beyond its Wild West image: "Doubt if you can get them but if possible get us some live Indians."

Clyde Vandeburg, chief of the Centennial's magazine division, elaborated on the assignment list: "What we want to attempt," he wrote to Polly, "is to get...the ordinary views of ordinary subjects—views of simple, every day, familiar subjects that the reader of the average farm publication or trade journal will appreciate and understand. Let color and human interest dominate in all your photographs." Armed with the list and a letter of introduction from the Centennial's promotion department, Polly set off on her solitary, 10-month trip across Texas.

From October 1935 through January 1936, she traveled through Central and East Texas, where she shot scenes of the booming East Texas oil and lumber industries, of mechanized farms and rural cotton workers, skyscrapers and 19th-Century homes, busy ports and simple water lilies. The images immediately began appearing in publications across the country.

She spent most of the spring of 1936 in South and West Texas. Her South Texas photos feature orange groves and palm trees, while those taken in West Texas show the Spanish influence on the state.

Her work was never easy. "I work as it is from sun up to sun down and far into the nite [sic] developing," she wrote in March. "I spent

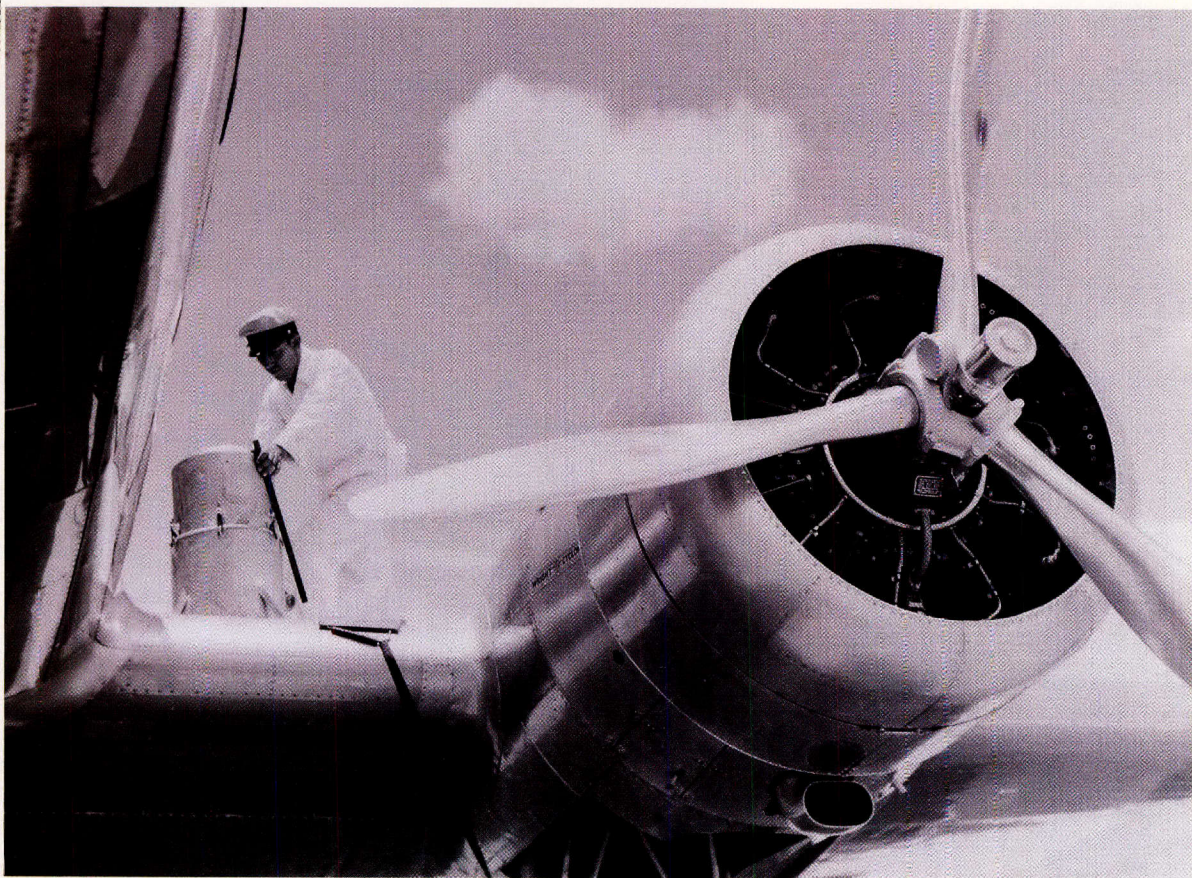


[RIGHT] Texas Derby winner's circle, Arlington Downs

[FAR RIGHT] Woman beside *horno* (oven), Lower Rio Grande Valley

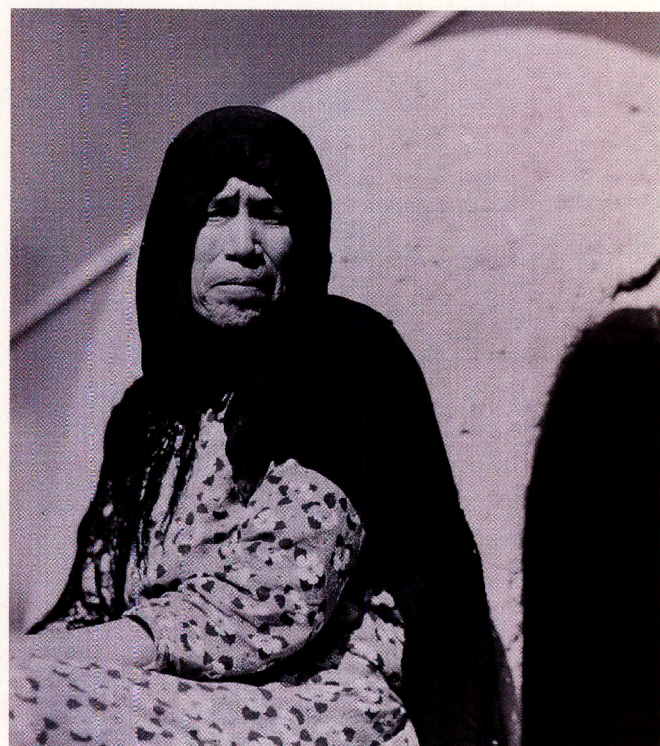


“WHAT we want to attempt,” Clyde Vandeburg wrote to Polly, “simple, every day, familiar subjects.... Let color and human



[FAR LEFT] Stonework at a quarry near Austin

[LEFT] Refueling a Pan American airplane



“is to get...the ordinary views of ordinary subjects—views of interest dominate in all your photographs.”

practically three days last week in [San Antonio] battling with the police, trying to get shots planned....”

Like other photographers, the young woman depended on good weather. In a letter to Clyde Vandeburg, Polly’s mother wrote, “Polly is, as you know, in Houston and vicinity, importuning the Sun god, but so far the days have been ‘cold, dark and dreary.’” While in San Antonio, Polly reported to the Centennial’s promotion department, “I have been expecting this fog to lift momentarily but so far nothing has happened but another norther. Since the shots Mr. Vandeburg requested are mostly architectural, it is quite essential for the sun to be present so I will just stay here and take the interiors and hope.”

In March, Polly suffered a serious setback when someone stole her camera equipment. Her sister Gail Muskavitch has said, “She used to get so excited about what she was doing that she often didn’t lock [her vehicle].” In a letter to Jacque Lansdale, on the Centennial staff, Polly described the theft as “my great loss.” She wrote that she felt especially sad because “it was the lens with which I began my endeavors in this weird field and I loved it very much.” Fortunately, the Dallas office paid for new equipment, and by the end of March, she was back in business.

At that point, Polly’s mode of travel changed. Previously, she had driven from hotel to hotel along her route, accumulating negatives and periodically stopping to develop them. But with the delay caused by the theft, a friend in Austin had time to build an air-conditioned dark-room for her on the back of a Ford truck. From then on, Polly forsook hotels and lived in the truck, stopping to develop her work under any shady tree along the road.

Polly’s photographs from this period appeared in magazines like *House Beautiful*, *Pictorial Review*, *Furniture Age*, and *Architectural Forum*. Her artistic tendencies, however, occasionally earned her a word of caution. Clyde Vandeburg wrote to her, “*Vanity Fair* or *Vogue* would be very likely to accept an angle shot such as the circular staircase, but it would be a total loss with *Cappers Farmer* or the *Angora Goat Raiser*.”

The Centennial ended in November 1936, and with it ended one of the greatest publicity efforts the state has ever seen. Afterward, Polly went on to other freelance assignments. Her body of work became



[RIGHT] Crushing sorghum on a farm near Austin

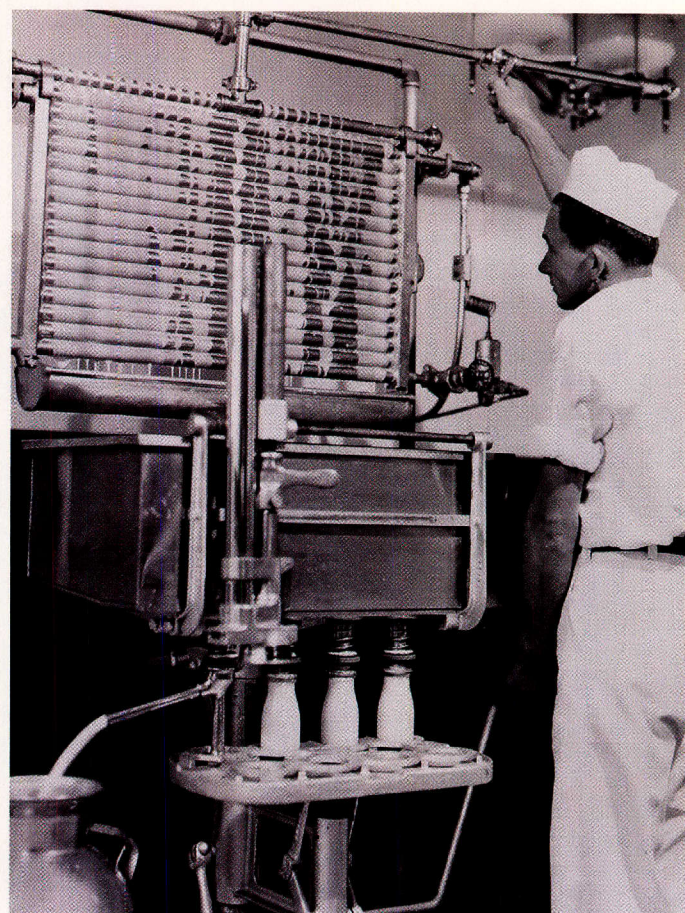
[FAR RIGHT] Bottling milk at a dairy near Austin





[FAR LEFT] Oil field workers, Gregg County, East Texas

[LEFT] Laird Hill, aka Pistol Hill, just southwest of Kilgore in Rusk County



so well known that in 1938, *Texas Parade* called her “one of Texas’ finest artists with the camera,” and added, “Pick up an illustrated book on Texas and you likely will find one or more of her ‘unusual’ shots.”

But in 1944, soon after enrolling at the University of Texas to study painting and sculpture, Polly was diagnosed with the first of what would become a series of health problems. She quit her classes and permanently retired from photography. For the rest of her life, she lived quietly and reclusively with various family members. In 1969, she moved to Auburn, California, and remained there until her death on June 18, 1980.

Polly Smith’s Centennial photos capture a fascinating era in Texas history, as the state began to shed its image as a rough and wild territory and to promote its status as a national power. Since 1938, the Dallas Historical Society has preserved the Texas Centennial Central Exposition’s papers—including Polly’s photographs. The Hall of State in Dallas’ Fair Park permanently displays a selection of her works. ★

EVELYN BARKER of Dallas has previously written for the history journal *Legacies*. This is her first article for *Texas Highways*.



[RIGHT] Street scene, Laredo

[FAR RIGHT] Student Union, University of Texas, Austin



[FAR LEFT] Sailboats, probably on White Rock Lake in Dallas

[LEFT] Houston Ship Channel



WHEN...WHERE...HOW

Polly Smith, Photographer

The Dallas Historical Society, located in the Hall of State in Fair Park, owns about 200 of Polly Smith's Texas Centennial prints, some 20 of which are on permanent display in the Hall of State. To reach Fair Park from Interstate 30 in Dallas, take the 2nd Ave. exit (just east of downtown), and go south on 2nd Ave. three blocks to the park.

The Hall of State and its exhibits are open to the public at no charge. Hours: Tue-Sat 9-5, Sun 1-5. Wheelchair accessible. The historical society's library opens Tue-Fri 9:30-4:30. Write to the Dallas Historical Society, Box 150038, Dallas 75315-0038; 214/421-4500. Web sites: www.dallashistory.com and www.hallofstate.com.

As the site of the 1936 Texas Centennial Central Exposition, Fair Park boasts a renowned collection of Art Deco buildings and artwork. The park, which includes museums, theaters, and gardens, also hosts the State Fair of Texas each fall. Call 214/421-9600 for Fair Park events, exhibits, hours, and directions.



*Emerald
waters and
golden sunsets
beckon at*

Lake TRAVIS

By Randy Mallory • Photographs by Michael A. Murphy



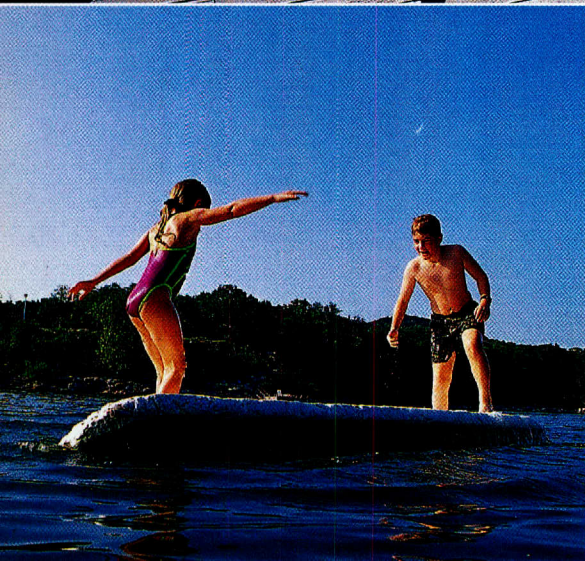
Hundreds of sunset-worshippers survey the scene from decks 450 feet above Lake Travis. These devotees have flocked to an eatery called The Oasis—the self-proclaimed “Sunset Capital of Texas”—for a daily ritual that hits full stride in summertime.

To the left, Mansfield Dam impounds the Colorado River, creating this, the longest of the six so-called Highland Lakes. To the right, limestone cliffs drop precipitously. Ahead, ski boats and their hangers-on cut patterns in the emerald water. Oasis employee Shirley Shaw remarks that some European visitors say this Hill Country panorama reminds them of Lake Como in northern Italy.

As the last smidgen of golden sun slips below the blue horizon, bells sound, and people applaud and raise a glass to the life-giving orb. Symbolically, they also toast the fun-in-the-sun atmosphere permeating life on Lake Travis, located a scenic half-hour drive west of Austin.

Locals and vacationers keep their land legs limber through camping, hiking, biking, and nature study at 17 public parks that dot the lake's 270 miles of shoreline. But it's Lake Travis' watersports—skiing, boating, swimming, fishing, scuba diving, and sailing—that attract most of the 2 million annual visitors and estimated 28,000 permanent lake residents.

Clear, clean water has drawn people for 10,000 years to this stretch of the Colorado as it fingers its way through today's Travis and Burnet

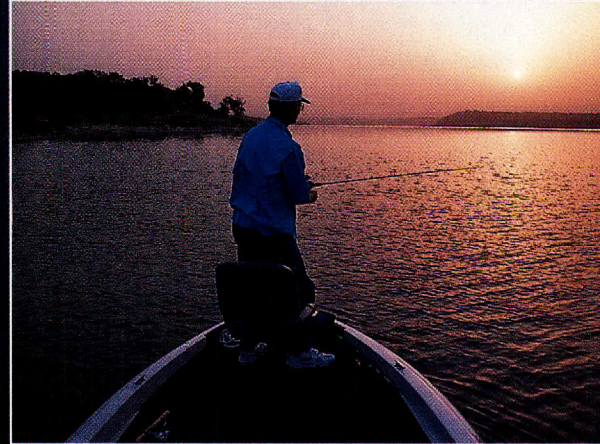
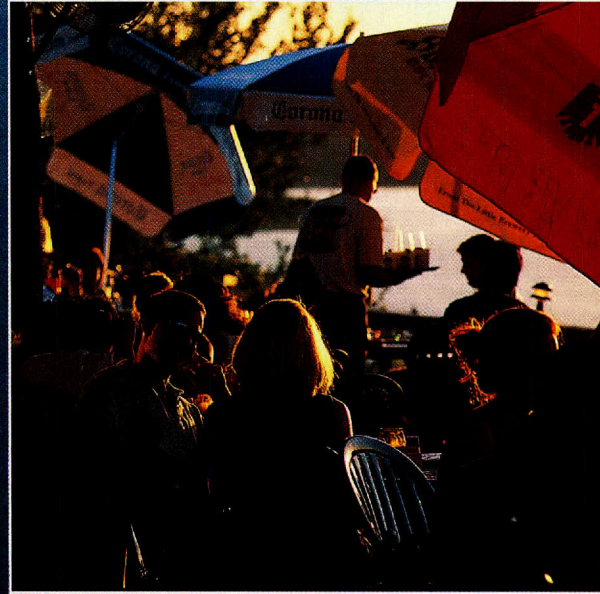


[FACING PAGE] With 32 decks overlooking the main basin of Lake Travis, The Oasis serves up spectacular sunsets with its food and libations.

[LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM] Lake Travis, a serpentine stretch of the Colorado River, provides water-lovers with plenty of diversions. Competitive souls can set sail in frequent regattas, teenagers and college co-eds flock to Volente Beach and other hot spots, and kids ride the wave of lake-time fun.







Texas Highways photography editor Mike Murphy took this aerial view (left) last fall, as wispy fog hovered over the lake's southern peninsulas. Numerous marinas along the lake's 270 miles of shoreline harbor watercraft of every design, from small fishing vessels to flashy speedboats and houseboats.

[INSETS, TOP TO BOTTOM] Scullers, like Cow Creek resident Madelyn Naber, cherish early mornings on the lake. The Iguana Grill, with its great view of the main basin, hops in the evening. Fishing guide Allen Christenson has been plying the waters here since the Fifties.

counties. Park rangers sometimes find prehistoric arrow points at Pace Bend Park. "We're only a mile from where the Pedernales River enters the Colorado, so easy access to two rivers has always made this an enticing area," says ranger Ron Phillips.

On the Waterfront

Today, visitors can reach the waterfront at the public parks and recreation areas, and at several private campgrounds. In addition, some two dozen marinas and rental shops offer boat ramps and watercraft of various types. A handful of resorts—including Lago Vista Resorts, Lakeway Inn, World of Tennis, and Resort Ranch—offer golf, tennis, horseback riding, and sunset cruises. Most facilities are located at the lake's busy lower end.

On Travis' uncrowded upper end, the LCRA operates seven recreation areas from which skiers make long runs. In brushy areas and shallow water, anglers cast for catfish, crappie, and bass—including Guadalupe bass, the official state fish.

Travis County operates nine parks on the lake's lower end. The largest and most popular, 1,520-acre Pace Bend Park, boasts nine miles of shore. The park manages its interior section as a wildlife preserve, where deer, raccoon, fox, jackrabbits, and birds roam undisturbed by vehicular traffic. The rugged terrain here boasts excellent lake views from hiking trails. Close to the water along the park's perimeter, outdoors-enthusiasts also enjoy broad vistas from tent and picnic spots situated atop high cliffs. Below the cliffs, especially on the park's southwestern edge, quiet coves attract sunbathers and swimmers, who bask on massive limestone boulders at the water's edge.

Other sunbathers bask—in the buff—on limestone boulders at another, equally well-known county park. Perched on the lake's north shore, overlooking Lake Travis' main basin, McGregor/Hippie Hollow Park maintains its decades-old standing as the

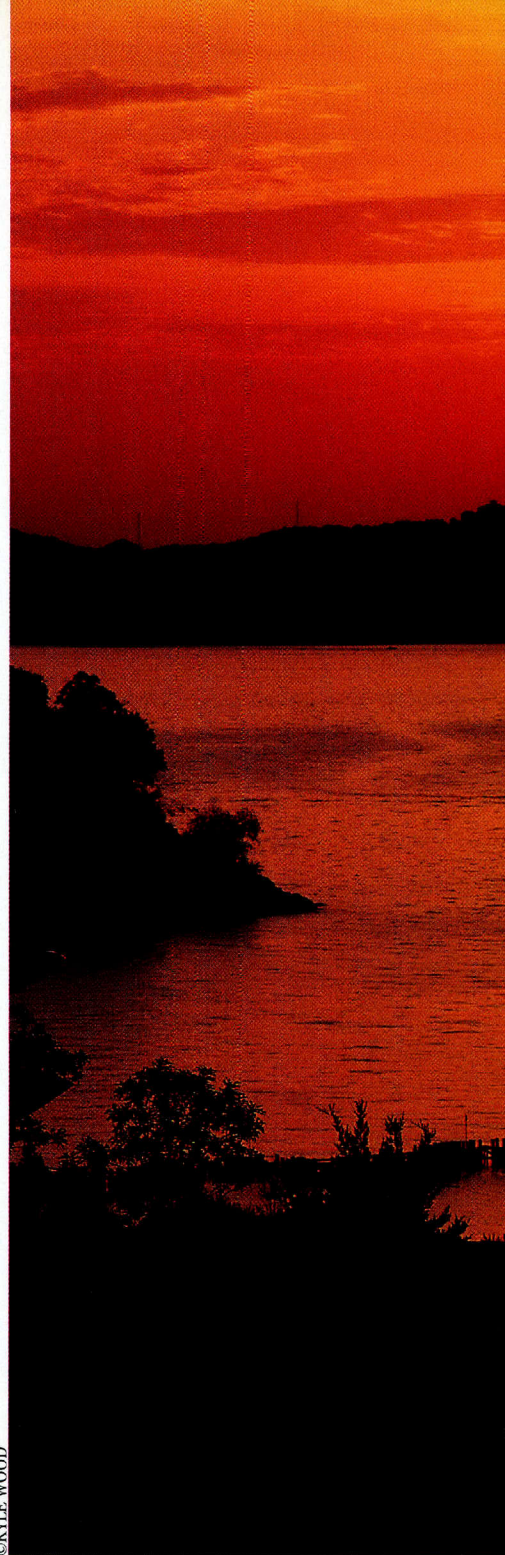
state's only "clothing optional" public park. Floating buoys and ropes keep the shoreline bathers a safe distance from the ever-present, boat-bound "sight-seers."

Folks soak up rays more discreetly at nearby Volente Beach, created in the 1950s in the community of Volente. Refurbished in the mid-1990s, the fun spot now looks like a scene from a vintage beach-party movie. Adults and youngsters lounge on an artificial beach formed from 5,000 tons of sand moved onto a lakefront slope. Nearby, college kids spike volleyballs at three lighted courts and sip beverages from a beach bar. Volente Beach also sports a grill and the floating, full-service VIP Marina.

At the marina, Mitch and Louise Phillips operate Utopian Cruises and welcome guests aboard the 78-foot *Utopia*, a cruiser for group day-charters and overnight lake jaunts. Mitch pilots the vessel—which can hold 50 on day trips and sleeps 10 overnight—and Louise helps out on deck and in the kitchen. If you prefer piloting your own houseboat, Hurst Harbor Marina, one of the lake's largest marinas, offers five 56-foot, fully equipped party cruisers (see When...Where...How, page 34).

While at Volente, check out a long-time hangout just down the road that dishes up some of the best hand-breaded chicken-fried steak and catfish on the lake...not to mention conversation around the checkers table. VJ's Grocery & Cafe remains virtually unchanged since the late 1930s, when Mansfield Dam construction hands topped off their workdays with cold beer and target practice. "They'd shoot their pistols from the backroom window at beer bottles lined up outside," says owner Bob Freeman, whose family bought the store and eatery in the early Sixties. "There were 13 bars along Volente Road back then, and we're about the only one left," Bob adds.

Clint Eastwood found the joint so endearing that he rented VJ's to film several scenes for his 1993 movie, *A Perfect World*, in which he starred with Kevin Costner.



©KYLE WOOD

Sports Galore

A perfect world—for scuba divers, at least—lies below the waves off Windy Point. With depths up to 190 feet in the river channel, Lake Travis is one of the deepest lakes in Texas. And, according to the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, it's also the state's clearest



What a way to end the day: shimmering water, picturesque fishing boats, and a hilly horizon. Above it all, in a resplendent sky, the sun begins to dip below the hills in this view from Marshall Ford Marina.

reservoir. Visibility averages 10 to 15 feet but reaches 35 feet in the spring, says Mike Moore, who, along with Gary Walshire, operates Aquatic Adventures Scuba, one of several dive schools in the area.

Divers from across Texas come to Travis County's Bob Wentz Park at Windy Point and neighboring Windy

Point Park, a private dive center. Diving instructors and park operators have submerged seven aluminum platforms just offshore from these parks to serve as diving classrooms.

"Lake Travis is hard to beat for water clarity," says Gary Degelo of Belton, who took up the hobby two years ago in order

to dive with his daughter. "And even the fish are friendly down there. The catfish and perch will eat bits of hot dogs right out of your hand."

Windy Point Park president Richard Barstow enhanced his underwater world by adding a sculpture garden 20 to 40 feet down. Divers see metal figures of

Fickle Finger of FLOW



While scenic shores and clear water make Lake Travis a recreational haven, geography and climate make its Hill Country surroundings the most flood-prone area in the United States.

Breezes blow from the Gulf of Mexico, rising rapidly as they meet the Edwards Plateau, whose eastern escarpment bisects Austin. When warm, moist Gulf air collides with cold Pacific or Canadian air, thunderstorms can bring localized,

torrential downpours, usually in spring and fall. Any spot can get much of its annual rainfall (30 inches or so) in one deluge. Thin, rocky soils can't soak up such drenchings, so the Colorado and its steep-banked tributaries funnel water downstream at an alarming rate.

Most of the river's water, in fact, comes from floods. Between 1843 and 1938, 22 major floods swelled the river—most severely in 1869, when high water inundated Austin.

[ABOVE] Popular with walkers, Mansfield Dam, which separates Lake Austin from Lake Travis, has been closed to vehicles for several years. Instead, traffic crosses via a four-lane highway on the Lake Austin side.

a sea turtle, a shark, a scuba man, and a manatee. "Divers like to go down there and goof around and have their pictures made," says Richard. "Once, they even dressed the scuba man in a nightie."

Bob Wentz Park at Windy Point also serves as the epicenter for windsurfing, because it juts into the lake's main basin. On warm summer days, windsurfers launch boards here and catch southerly breezes in their colorful sails. Beginners and intermediates tend to zigzag near the shoreline. Hotdoggers, eager for speed, venture out into open water and may windsurf the two miles or so to Mansfield Dam and back.

"In the late afternoon, thermal effects build up a nice breeze that experienced windsurfers like to catch," explains Mike Schultz, president of the Austin

Windsurf Club. "Any weekend, you get a mixture of beginning students and real veterans. The stronger the wind, the more experienced windsurfers you'll see out on the water."

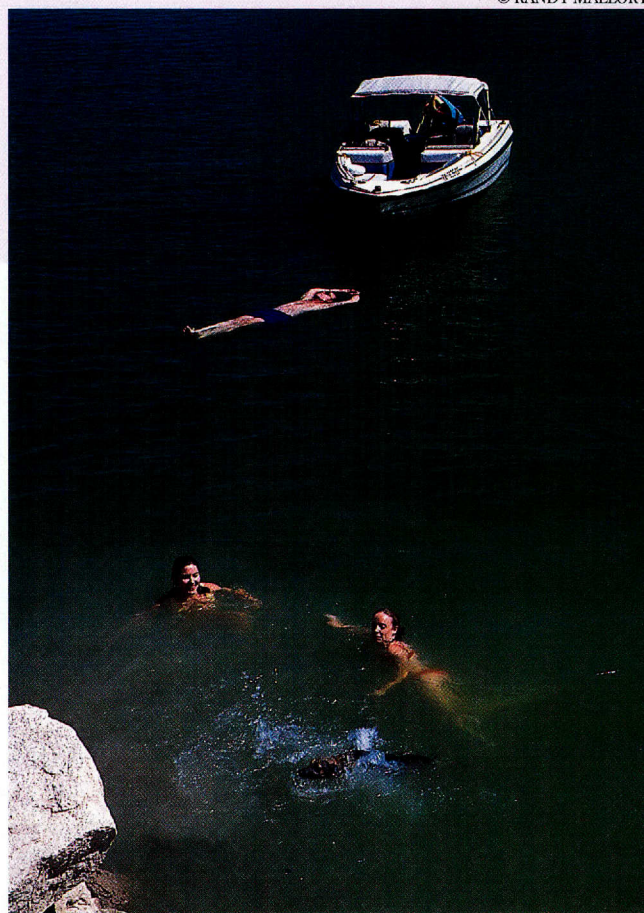
Just upstream from Windy Point, larger sailing vessels ply Lake Travis' waters from their home base, the Austin Yacht Club. The club sponsors several annual regattas. These colorful events lure up to 100 sailboats onto the water at a time, each tacking along the designated race route. The club's regattas feature small centerboard sailboats, the larger

Old-timers still tell tales about *this* century's strongest surge. "I remember the big flood of 1935," says Edwin Rosenbusch of Georgetown. Edwin, a teenager at the time, was living on his family's 320-acre ranch in the community of Mud, now part of Pace Bend Park. "A mile of our riverfront had lots of old native pecans. I could hear those big trees cracking under the weight of the water."

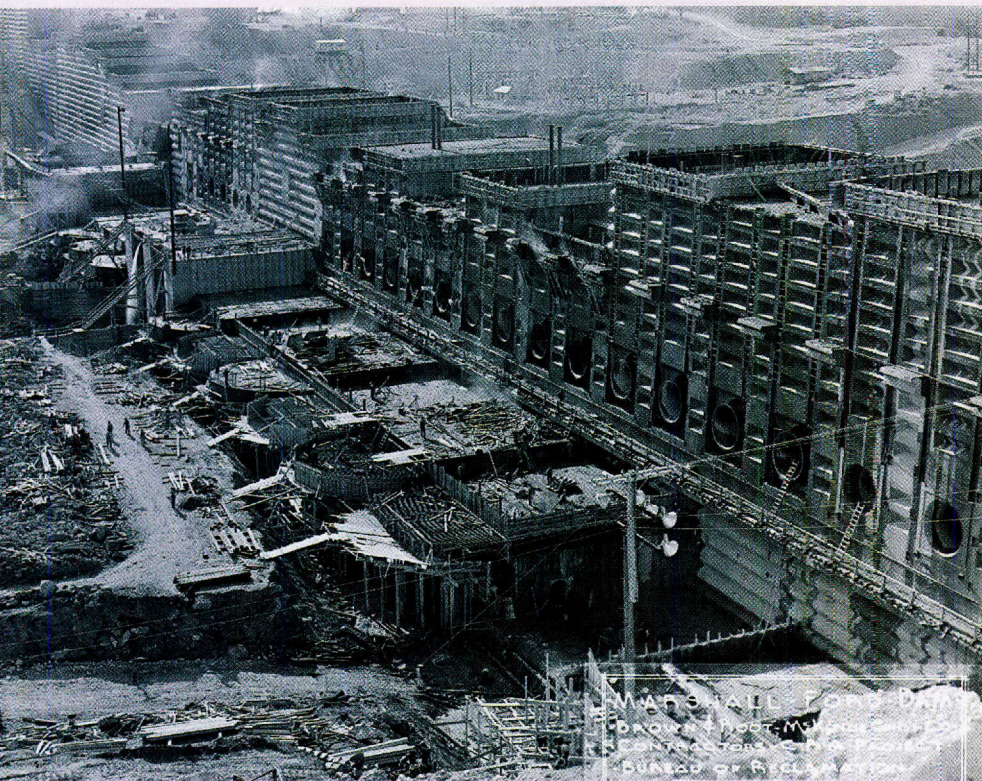
Another flood in 1938 washed away the family's fences and crops. It also temporarily halted construction of a dam being built by the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to help corral the Colorado. Austin residents can recall seeing houses wash by the Congress Avenue bridge.

Originally called Marshall Ford Dam, Mansfield Dam, completed in 1941, was renamed for project supporter and Texas Congressman J.J. Mansfield of Eagle Lake. It forms Lake Travis by backing up the Colorado for 64 miles, from the

© RANDY MALLORY



Pace Bend Park, the largest and busiest of the lake's 17 public parks, boasts dozens of coves, most of which are perfect for taking a dip.



COURTESY LCRA

The photo on the opposite page makes it look so simple, huh? An amazing feat of engineering, Mansfield Dam, shown here in 1938, has helped corral the Colorado since 1941. Tours of the dam's powerhouse will resume after an improvement project is completed in a few years.

historic low-water crossing of Marshall Ford to Max Starcke Dam at Lake Marble Falls. The 266-foot-high, 7,098-foot-long earth-and-concrete structure collects water from the Pedernales and Llano rivers and

four Highland Lakes—Buchanan, Inks, LBJ, and Marble Falls. (The chain also includes Lake Austin, the stretch of river between Mansfield and Tom Miller dams, the latter just west of downtown Austin.)

Like its sister lakes, Travis generates hydroelectricity and supplies water to towns and croplands. But while the other lakes don't fluctuate much (passing through as much water as they receive), Travis frequently rises and falls. As the LCRA's only flood-control and water-supply lake, the lake holds water from rainy times and releases it during dry times to downstream users, including the city of Austin.

The plan seems to work. The river still floods, as experienced in June of 1997 and in the Christmas 1991 flood, when Lake Travis reached its historic high level of 710 feet above mean sea level (m.s.l.)—less than five feet below the dam's spillway. But even that flood sent a tolerable 35,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water through Austin. Compare that with the pre-dam 1935 flood, when an astounding 481,000 cfs swept through the Capital City.

Ironically, the area also suffers from periodic droughts, most recently in 1996, that leave boats stranded and normally submerged islands high and dry. A prolonged dry spell in the 1950s brought Travis to its historic low of 614 feet m.s.l., only 28 percent of capacity. The drought ended in 1957, characteristically, with two major floods within six months.

—Randy Mallory

keeled sailboats, or sometimes a combination of both.

Thrill-seekers catch the wind *above* the water with the aid of Airscape Parasail Adventures, based at Volente Beach's VIP Marina. Owners Richard, Anita, and Mike Welch strap customers (one or two at a time) into a harness attached to a parachute. From the takeoff platform on their 32-foot powerboat (where you also land after the ride), the Welchses ease you into the air as the boat pulls you along via a tether. Parasailors soar as high as 600 feet above the lake's surface.

Higher still, two passengers at a time can take a spectacular early-morning hot-air balloon ride over the lake with balloon pilot David Smuck of Austin Aeronauts Hot Air Balloons. David pilots a leisurely 90-minute flight from the

lake's main basin toward its upper reaches and the Hill Country beyond.

Fine Unwinding

While adventure, high and low, brings people to Lake Travis during the day, varied dining, libations, and live music keep them there deep into the night.

You can taste the refined life while overlooking Lake Travis at Slaughter-Leftwich Winery, which produces some 7,000 cases of wine per year. Head vintner Scott Slaughter and his mother, June Leftwich Head, grow grapes on 50 acres near Lubbock and bring them to the winery to turn them into wine, most of which sells in Central Texas. During August and September, they make their

French varietal wines—Chardonnays, Cabernets, and blushes—high on a hill near the lake. Visitors can tour the winery, a native-stone structure, and its massive, French-style barrel room, then sample the fare in the tasting room.

Some lake-lovers, whose "après-ski" evenings call for four-star food, flock to Hudson's on the Bend, rated by *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine as one of America's top restaurants. Award-winning owner-chef Jeffrey Blank deems his culinary creations "Texas Hill Country Cuisine." In addition to seafood and steak, he dishes up wild game—venison, quail, pheasant, duck, wild boar, rattlesnake—either smoked in a rock smokehouse or grilled over pecan wood. He accents the meats with innovative Southwestern-style sauces—including guava-sour cherry, mango-

Summer Fun on Lake Travis

Lake Travis, one of the six Highland Lakes formed by dams on the Colorado River, begins at the Max Starcke Dam east of Marble Falls and ends at Mansfield Dam just west of Austin. **The area code is 512.**

The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) owns 15 parks on Lake Travis, including 7 operated by Travis County (**Pace Bend, Arkansas Bend, Sandy Creek, Cypress Creek, Bob Wentz Park at Windy Point, MacGregor Park/Hippie Hollow, and Mansfield Dam**). For information on these 7 parks, plus details on **Dink Pearson** and **Tom Hughes** parks, write to Travis Co. Parks, Box 1748, Austin 78767; 473-9437. Web site: www.co.travis.tx.us/parks.

You can obtain a "Park Pack" (which includes a map of the aforementioned parks), as well as information about the 7 LCRA-owned and -operated recreation areas (most have primitive camping and hiking; some have boat docks) by writing to the LCRA, 3700 Lake Austin Blvd., Box 220, Austin 78767; 512/473-4083 or 800/776-5272, ext. 4083. Web site: www.lcra.org.

Camp Chautauqua, next to Pace Bend Park (take FM 2322 toward Pace Bend, and look for signs), is owned by the LCRA and operated by the Chautauqua Foundation with day-use activities,

screened shelters, RV hookups, and campsites with hot showers. Call 264-1752 to make overnight reservations, or write to Rt. 1, Box 30, Spicewood 78669.

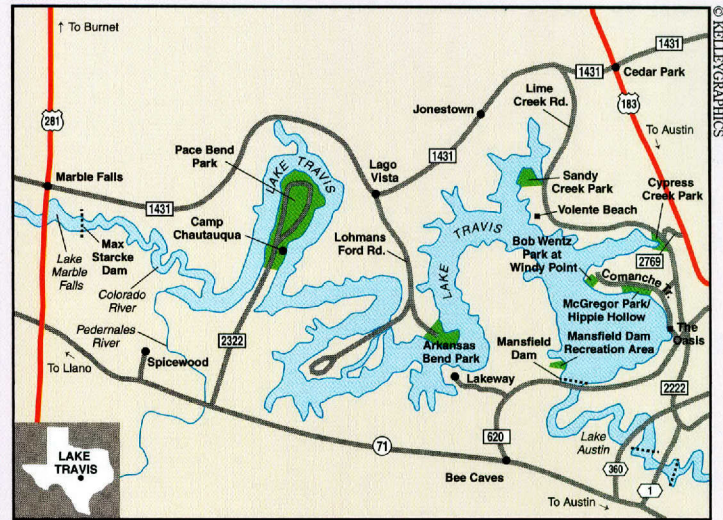
For lists of marinas, resorts, restaurants, lodging, private campgrounds, and events, write to the following: Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau, 201 E. 2nd St., Austin 78701, 800/926-2282 (Web site: www.austintexas.org); Lago Vista Chamber of Commerce, Box 4946, Lago Vista 78645, 267-7952 or 800/328-5246; Lake Travis Chamber of Commerce, Box 340034, Austin 78734, 263-3188.

4th of July Events

On July 2, **Carlos 'N Charlie's** (266-1683) holds its 6th annual Fourth of July Weekend Fireworks Party, featuring fireworks and live music.

The **Lago Vista 4th of July Council** presents a parade on July 3 (10 a.m. on Dawn Dr. in Lago Vista) and a fireworks show on July 4 at Lago Vista's Bar K Recreational Park at dark. Admission is limited to area residents and guests, but fireworks can be viewed from public streets and the lake. Call Ann Murrow at 267-3200 or 267-2126.

The **City of Lakeway** (261-8403) presents a patriotic parade July 3 at 9 a.m. at the Live Oak Clubhouse, 510 Lakeway Dr., and a July 4 fireworks show followed by an



all-day picnic at Lakeway City Park, 502 Hurst Creek Dr.

Boating/Skiing

Boaters can launch at most of the public parks listed above and at private marinas located mainly on the lake's lower end. Some marinas and private outfitters rent boats, barges, and ski equipment. Call the chambers for listings.

Warning: Changing water levels increase the chances of boats hitting underwater hazards such as sand bars, islands, and submerged objects. Consult a contour map such as the "Lake Travis Boating and Recreation Guide," available from the LCRA (call 473-3366) for \$10. For water levels, call 800/776-5272, ext.

3333, or 473-3333, or listen on the hour to radio AM 1610 near the lake.

For houseboats, try **Utopian Cruises** (918-0931), based at VIP Marina at Volente Beach. For rates, call, or visit the Web site: utopia.home.texas.net. Pilot your own houseboat from **Hurst Harbor Marina** (266-1800). Rates: \$1,995 (3 p.m. Mon to 11 a.m. Thu) or \$2,195 (3 p.m. Fri to 9 a.m. Mon). *Reservations required.*

Sunset Cruises

Lakeway Inn Marina offers motor yacht cruises aboard the 60-foot **MY Lakeway** at 7 p.m. Fri-Sun from Easter through Sep. (when not booked for a private party). Call 261-7511 for reserva-

jalapeño, and tomatillo-white chocolate. Jeffrey recently added open-air dining in the herb-and-flower garden. Twice a month, he shares his secrets of haute cuisine at a cooking school at his home overlooking the lake.

Most restaurants on Lake Travis encourage Austin's famously laid-back lifestyle, and, also in true Austin style, often mix it with live music.

One hot spot, Iguana Grill, offers a spectacular view of the lake along with what it calls "Lake-Mex" Mexican food. Guests pack the restaurant's cliff-top patio, sipping gigantic margaritas and

dining under the stars on specialties such as "Camarones a la Plancha" (grilled shrimp basted with red chili barbecue sauce) and "Enchiladas de Espinaca y Hongos" (spinach-and-mushroom enchiladas in a mild poblano cream sauce). As they dine, guests gaze at lights twinkling from homes nestled in the surrounding hills and from boats slowly drifting by several hundred feet below.

Day or night, boaters can pull right up to another popular waterfront eatery,



In Volente, stop in for a meal (CFS and catfish win raves) at VJ's Grocery & Cafe, virtually unchanged since the Thirties. Owner Bob Freeman knows lake history like the back of his hand.

tions and prices. Resort Ranch of Lake Travis also runs regular sunset cruises on its 72-foot **Resort Ranch I** cruise boat. Call 264-2533 or 800/888-5253 for times and prices. Web site: www.resort-ranch.com.

Swimming

Swimming is popular at all lake parks, with Travis County's **McGregor/Hippie Hollow Park** notable as Texas' only "clothing optional" public park. Privately operated **Volente Beach** (258-5109; Web site: www.volente-beach.com) features a man-made sandy beach, plus a restaurant and a marina.

Scuba Diving

Windy Point peninsula features diving at **Bob Wentz Park** and at **Windy Point Park** (266-3337), a privately-operated dive center with training platforms, tank refilling, and primitive camping. Mansfield Dam and McGregor/Hippie Hollow parks also attract divers. For diving lessons, try **Aquatic Adventures Scuba**, 12129 Ranch Rd. 620 N., #440, Austin 78750 (219-1220).

Sailing

The Austin Yacht Club (266-1336; Web site: www.austinyachtclub.org) hosts the **Governor's Cup Regatta** July 3-4, 1999, as well as the **Fall Regatta**, Oct. 9-10, 1999, and the **Turnback Canyon Regatta**, usually Memorial Day weekend. For sailboat rentals,

sailing instruction, or to charter a captained sailboat, contact the **Texas Sailing Academy** (261-6193) at Lakeway Marina or **Commander's Point Yacht Basin** (266-2333) near Mansfield Dam. *Reservations recommended.* For parasailing, call **Airscape Parasail Adventures** (257-9675).

Bob Wentz Park at Windy Point is also a windsurfing hangout. Every Thu. at 5:30 p.m. in the summer, the **Austin Windsurf Club** (835-2377) sponsors a group sail open to the public at Bob Wentz Park; bring your own windsurfing board and sail. The club also offers spring windsurf clinics and swap meets; call for dates.

Fishing

Anglers go for Lake Travis' several kinds of bass, catfish, and crappie. For a list of marinas, contact the LCRA. For information on tournaments (mostly held in the spring), contact marinas and area tackle shops. For Lake Travis fishing reports and boat ramps, see the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department's Web site: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fish/infish/lakes/travis/lake_id.htm.

Hot-Air Ballooning
Austin Aeronauts Hot Air Balloons (440-1492 or 800/444-3257; Web site: www.austinaeronauts.com) offers an hour-long sunrise flight over Lake Travis

that leaves from near Mansfield Dam. The cost is \$325 per person, limited to 2 or 3 passengers. *Call at least 2 weeks in advance to book a date.* On July 24, the **Central Texas Ballooning Assn.** (479-9421) sponsors a Lake Fun Flight featuring a dozen balloons lifting off over the lake at sunrise.

Resorts

Upscale waterfront resorts offer lodging, dining, and recreation such as golf, tennis, swimming, boating, horseback riding, and hiking. Contact: **Lago Vista Clubs & Resort** (267-1161 or 800/288-1882; Web site: www.lagovista.com), **Lakeway Inn** (261-6600 or 800/LAKE-WAY), **World of Tennis** (800/255-4389), and **Resort Ranch of Lake Travis** (264-2533 or 800/888-5293; Web site: www.resort-ranch.com).

For bed and breakfasts and other near-lake lodging, contact the chambers listed previously.

Restaurants & Entertainment

Waterfront eateries include: **The Oasis Cantina Del-Lago**, 6550 Comanche Tr.; 266-2442. Hours: Mon-Thu 11:30-10, Fri 11:30-11, Sat 11-11, Sun 11-10. Summer live music Fri-Sun 7:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m. **Carlos 'N Charlie's**, 5973 Hiline Rd.; 266-1683. Web site: www.CnCaustin.com. Hours: Sun-Thu 11-10, Fri-Sat 11-11 (bar open daily 11 a.m.-1 a.m.).

Live music Wed-Sun (Mar-Sep). **Iguana Grill**, 2900 RR 620 N.; 266-8439. Hours: Sun-Thu 11-9, Fri-Sat 11-10. **Sam Hill Waterfront Grill**, 16405 Clara Van Tr.; 266-2811. Live music Wed-Sun. Hours: Tue-Thu and Sun 11-9, Fri-Sat 11 a.m.-midnight.

Hudson's on the Bend restaurant is at 3509 RR 620 N.; 266-1369. Hours: Mon-Thu 6 p.m.-10 p.m., Fri-Sat 5:30 p.m.-10 p.m., Sun 6 p.m.-9 p.m. For details on Chef Jeffrey Blank's gourmet cooking classes, call 266-7655 or 800/996-7655.

Slaughter-Leftwich Winery is at 4209 Eck Ln.; 266-3331. Hours: Thu-Sun 1 p.m.-5 p.m. for winery tour and tasting (\$3 each, or both for \$5). Winemaking season runs mid-Aug. to mid-Sep.

Cow Creek Lakeside Lodge and RV Park has live music Fri-Sat nights and an open mike on Sun., plus lodging, hiking, and watersports. Write to 24607 RR 1431, Marble Falls 78654; 267-3652.

VJ's Grocery & Cafe is at 15401 RR 2769 at Volente (Rt. 3, Box 275, Leander 78641); 258-1633. Hours: Tue-Sat 9-9, Sun noon-9.

Mansfield Dam

At 7,089 feet long (274 feet high), Mansfield Dam is popular with walkers. Hours: Daily 7 a.m.-dusk.

Carlos 'N Charlie's, and park their crafts in courtesy slips just steps from their tables. They can even eat in their swimsuits if they want, backed by a restaurant sign boasting, "No Shirts, No Shoes, No Problem." On open-air decks cooled by misting fans, you can dine on the likes of hamburgers, seafood, Tex-Mex, and baby-back ribs, while enjoying live rock music into the wee hours.

Another easygoing eatery—and the lake's largest floating restaurant—**Sam Hill Waterfront Grill** also features a wide-ranging menu and live music that includes blues, rock, and country.

One of the most relaxed musical venues on Lake Travis is Cow Creek Lakeside Lodge and RV Park, on the lake's north shore. If you park your RV here or stay in one of the six rooms, you'd better like music, because it's there most nights during the summer. "We tend toward country and western, but we feature all kinds of local musicians," proprietor Dusty Hall reports. He respectfully refers to his place as "Lakenbach," a reference to the laid-back Hill Country town of Luckenbach.

As the sun goes down and the lights

come up on the waterfront, a solitary sailboat zigzags across open water, pushed toward shore by the day's waning breezes. High above the lone sailor, the bell sounds at The Oasis, and people applaud once more in tribute to the boat-loving, sun-worshiping, deep-diving water-world of Lake Travis. ★

Freelance writer RANDY MALLORY of Tyler has been poking around the shores of Lake Travis since he was a UT student in the Sixties.

MICHAEL A. MURPHY has spent many pleasurable hours skiing, fishing, sailing, swimming, and diving in and on Lake Travis.

AT PEARLAND, A HINDU TEMPLE WELCOMES THE CURIOUS AND NURTURES THE FAITHFUL

AS YOU LEAVE PEARLAND headed south on McLean Road, the setting seems typical enough—a shopping center, new subdivisions, a busy park, and a scattering of older homes and trailer houses. Then, a couple of miles down the narrow lane, one of the nation’s largest traditional Hindu temples, Sri Meenakshi Temple, rises abruptly from the flat coastal plains as if a mirage from a faraway land.

Cream-colored towers jut from a massive walled courtyard as high as 55 feet into the blue Texas sky. Hundreds of intricate concrete sculptures cover the tapering towers with tiers of pillared pavilions, swirling fan-shaped designs, and detailed figures from Hindu scripture. Skillful Indian artisans, most of them descended from a long line of temple builders, spent months in Texas handcrafting the elaborate ornamentation.

Midway on each side of the courtyard’s rectangular wall, a tower, or *gopuram*, looms above a wrought-iron gateway. The four towers mark the cardinal points—east, west, south, and north.

Beneath the western tower, visiting college students remove their shoes (a required sign of respect before entering a sacred Hindu place), then pass into the temple grounds, curious about the meaning of all they see.

Guide Beth Kulkarni, a member of the temple’s board of directors, begins her explanation with an introduction to Hinduism, one of the world’s oldest religions, which developed in India over thousands of years. “Like Jews, Christians, and Muslims, Hindus worship one God. We may perceive that one God in different ways, however, finding it helpful to have a concrete form on which to concentrate during worship,” she says.

Reaching skyward over Sri Meenakshi Temple’s eastern gateway, a pyramid-shaped tower features tiers of pillars and intricately shaped figures from Hindu scripture. Sri Meenakshi Temple is patterned after a more elaborate one of the same name in Madurai in southern India.

• SRI meenakshi • T E M P L E •

BY RANDY MALLORY



WHILE CATHEDRALS WERE BUILT FOR CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP ON A GRAND SCALE, HINDU TEMPLES ARE SCALED FOR INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY WORSHIP.



At the temple, this “concrete form” takes the shape of nine highly adorned sacred statues (*vigrahas*), carved in southern India from black granite. They represent major deities selected for the temple from among countless deities worshiped in the Hindu pantheon. And, for devotees, the statues—mainly human-like figures—symbolize universal aspects of God.

Resident Hindu priests from India ceremoniously began installing the statues in 1979 and continue to care for them according to rituals written in ancient sacred texts called *agamas*. The rituals involve, among other things, chanting Sanskrit prayers from the Vedas, the most ancient of the Hindu sacred scriptures. The priests also make offerings to the deities such as flowers, fruit, and incense. “While temples in India may have just one deity, we’re one of the few places in the world with such a diversity of deities,” Beth tells the group. “We did this in order to bring all the Hindu devotees in this area together into one community.”

Strolling along red and gray brick walkways and across pleasant green lawns, Beth points out four open-air pillared halls (*mandapams*), one in each corner of the courtyard, in which Hindus believe deities reside. In the center of the courtyard rests the main temple, a large, flat-roofed structure with three multitiered towers (called *Vimanas*) at one end in a striking architectural trinity. Directly beneath the towers sit shrines of the three major deities of this temple—Shiva, Vishnu, and Sri Meenakshi.

Beth directs the group up the steps of the main temple and into its dimly lit chamber. On one side of the far end stands a two-foot-tall *lingam*, a simple stone shape representing Sri Sundaeswara (Lord Shiva), the destroyer and re-creator. On the other side stands a six-foot statue of Sri Venkateswara (Lord Vishnu), the

sustainer, represented by a four-armed male figure resplendent with silver ornaments. In the middle rests the temple’s colorfully adorned presiding deity, Sri Meenakshi, a four-and-a-half-foot female figure symbolizing power, energy, and nature.



© GEORGE HOSEK

An open-air pillared hall, or *mandapam*, where Hindus believe deities reside, occupies each corner of the temple courtyard. In the northeast *mandapam*, shown here, a worshiper has offered typical gifts of coconut and fruit.

Sri Meenakshi resides in a darkened recess known as *Garba Griha* (womb-house). This site, like sacred sites the world over, bears special significance, says Asok Sen Mungara, a Houston architect involved for years in various projects here. “There’s a special mystery and meaning to Hindu-temple design, similar to that of the great medieval cathedrals of Eu-

rope,” he says. But while cathedrals were built for congregational worship on a grand scale, Hindu temples are scaled for individual or family worship.

“The flow of entry into the main temple—from the large outdoors to the small inner sanctum—is symbolic of discarding worldliness and moving to spiritual enlightenment,” Mungara explains. “The culmination of the experience comes as the devotee sees the fleeting image of the deity, lit in this darkened space by the light of a priest’s oil lamp. That experience is called *darshana*, or the vision of God.”

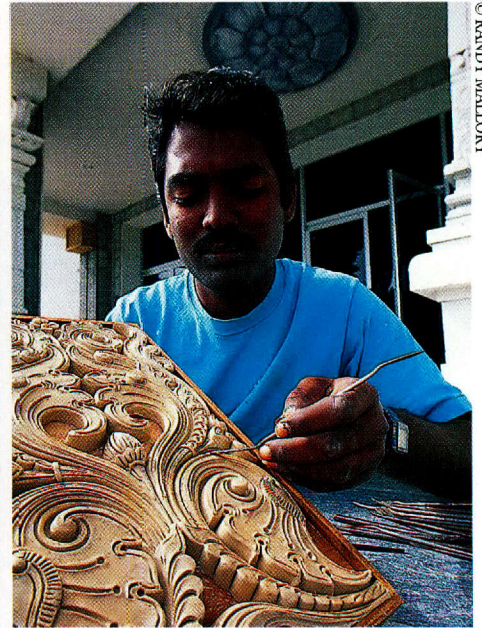
Throughout the day and evening, devotees come and go. Some request the services of a priest, who performs a short worship ceremony (*pooja*) for them. Others bow and pray on their own before the deities. They often ring a bell before approaching each shrine to announce their presence and to benefit from the sound. (Hindus believe that certain sound vibrations have positive effects on the body and spirit.)

SIMILAR BELLS RING on the other side of the globe at another Sri Meenakshi Temple. Built in the 17th Century in Madurai, in the southern Indian state



[ABOVE] Tiered domes rise above shrines to the temple's three major deities—Shiva, Vishnu, and Goddess Meenakshi. Sri Meenakshi, consort of Shiva, symbolizes power or nature. Hindus conceive of God in different forms, each of which is generally human-like and represents a particular aspect of God.

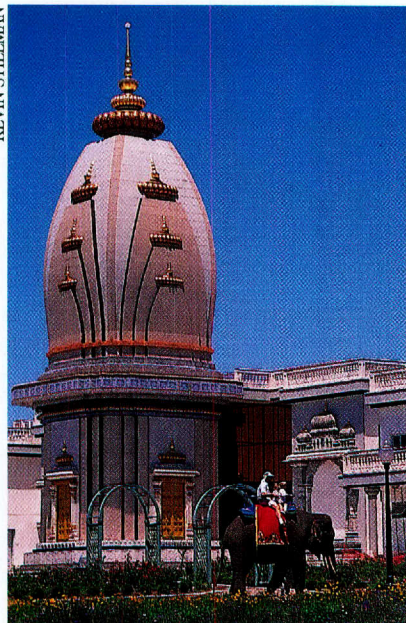
[BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT] A woman prays. Before approaching a shrine, worshipers may ring a bell to announce their presence. Hindus believe that certain sound vibrations, like those from bells and chanting, have positive spiritual and physical effects. M. Ramanathan, a third-generation temple artisan, sculpts a clay mold. Dozens of artisans came from southern India to work on Pearland's temple.



In Pearland, as in India, THE TEMPLE SERVES AS THE FOCUS OF HINDU COMMUNITY LIFE.



KEVIN STILLMAN



Texas has several Hindu temples. Sri Raseshwari Temple (512/288-7180), shown here during an open house celebration, is south of Austin.

of Tamil Nadu, this temple is one of India's largest and most elaborate. It served as a model for the small-

er, less ornate namesake temple that 29 families decided in October 1977 to found near Houston. K.R. Thiagarajan, Sam Kannappan, and R.N.S. Rao were elected as the first office bearers of the Sri Meenakshi Temple Society of Houston in March 1978.

"First, we built a small temple for Sri Ganesha, the remover of obstacles, to whom Hindus pray before starting any new task," says temple administrator P. Ramalingam. "Then, over the years, we expanded our property from five to 17 acres and added the main sanctums and the towers."

Two of India's most prominent temple architects—Padmasri S.M. Ganapathy Sthapathi and Padmasri Muthiah Sthapathi—designed Pearland's temple in the Dravidian style characteristic of south India.

"Religious principles dictate strict guidelines for Hindu-temple plans and structural proportions, similar to those found in Greek temples," says architect Mungara, "but the decorative ele-

ments vary with the creativity of the architect." Mungara designed the temple's most recent addition, a grand hall (*Kalyanamandapam*), where weddings and other social and cultural events are held. In Pearland, as in India, the temple serves as the focus of Hindu community life.

"Those of us who started the temple grew up in India with our Hindu rituals as an accepted part of life, but our kids grew up in Houston," says temple chairman Sam Kannappan, who came to Texas in the late 1960s in the first wave of mostly student immigrants from India. "We hope the temple will encourage them to continue their religious and cultural heritage and help them live according to *Dharma*, the Hindu code of life."

A second wave of Indian immigrants, many of them doctors and engineers, came during the 1970s, an era of U.S. shortages in medicine and engineering, says K.G. Malhotra, vice consul at Houston's Consulate of India. More recently, shortages of computer experts have brought programmers from India. Malhotra estimates that today, 55,000 Indians live in the Houston area, and another 40,000 or so live in other Texas cities, chiefly Dallas, Fort Worth, and Austin.

Catering to a growing population from India and other South Asian nations, a host of businesses has sprung up, especially in southwest Houston. Dozens of Indian and Pakistani restaurants, groceries, and jewelry and clothing shops cluster along Hillcroft and Bissonnet streets near the Southwest Freeway (US 59). Three week-

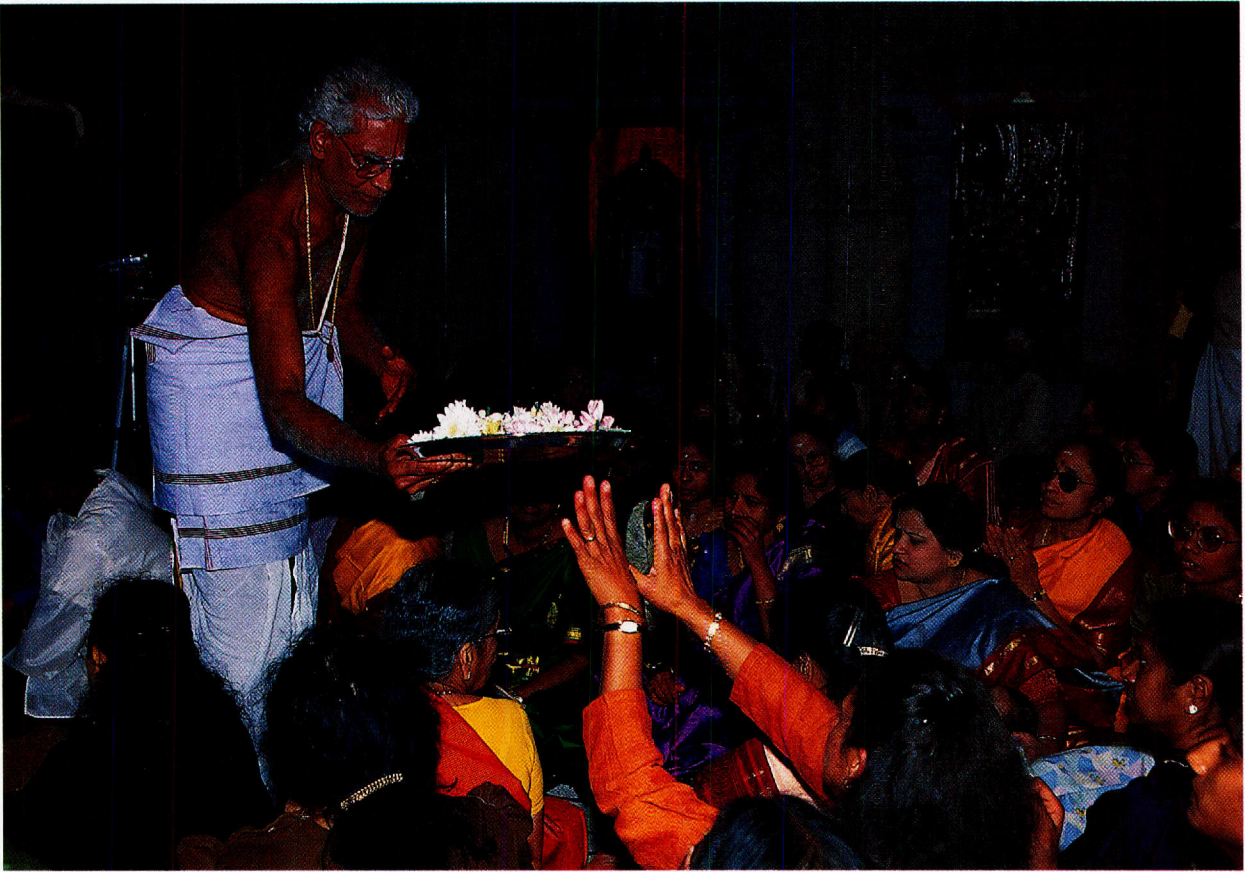


KEVIN STILLMAN

A recent festival at Sri Raseshwari Temple (see photo, top of page) included a performance by youngsters from San Antonio's Natyanjali dance troupe.

ly newspapers—*Indo-American News*, *Voice of Asia*, and *India Herald*—circulate news of readers' past and present homelands. Sports-minded South Asians root for their favorite cricket teams at regular matches played between local players from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), and other countries.

Movie fans flock to two theaters, Funplex Cinema III



Above, Sri Meenakshi Temple priest Sri Raghunatha Bhattar passes a platter of flowers to worshipers, who touch the blossoms as a way of participating in the priest's offering to the deity being honored. Below, devotees carry special water-filled copper pots as part of their procession.





and West Belfort Cinemas, for Indian films in Hindi. The long-running show *Music of India*, hosted by Meena Datt, airs on Saturdays on radio station KELR/1070-AM, broadcasting songs accompanied by traditional Indian instruments such as sarods, tambouras, harmoniums, tablas, and sitars.

In addition, in Houston and elsewhere, a handful of dance studios teach classical Indian movement. Their productions often tell stories from epic Hindu tales, such as *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, by using symbolic hand and body movements and subtle facial expressions. In 1975, Rathna Kumar, a classical dancer from India, opened what she believes was the first Indian dance studio in

Texas. "I felt that being in Houston would offer me so many opportunities that I should give something back," she says. "I started Anjali Center for Indian Performing Arts as a special offering to my new home.

"We often dance at the temple, which is the social and cultural center for the community, as well as a place for prayer. Art and life are interlinked in our traditions," she adds. Uma Bharathi Kosuri, Padmini Chari, and a few other teachers also maintain dance schools.

THOSE SHARED TRADITIONS unfold vividly throughout the year at a profusion of religious festivals held at Sri Meenakshi Temple. Several New Year's Day celebrations occur throughout the year, depending on when they're commemorated in different regions of India. One takes place January 1. Another popular such event, held in autumn, is Deepavali (or Diwali), which honors Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and luck. Also known as the Festival of Lights, in which Hindus decorate their homes and temples with lights as a symbol of good (light) winning over evil (darkness), it is the major gift-giving holiday for many Hindus. Sri Meenakshi Temple holds a colorful bazaar during the festival, with clothing and other gifts for sale.

Many temple festivals feature group worship led by



© RANDY MALLORY

**Once made from stone, detailed tower ornate-
mentations like these are now created with
concrete using special molds made by the
temple artisans.**

priests who recite Sanskrit scriptures and ceremonially bathe the deities being honored. The bathing, which begins and ends with water, may feature milk, yogurt, and honey—all costly ingredients in India, where such rituals began as a way of showing respect and affection for the deities. Festivals also include group processions—typically comprised of women in colorful saris and men carrying small statues of deities made of a special five-metal alloy—which always move clockwise around the main temple. Indian dance, music, and foods sometimes enhance these traditional festivals.

When visitors from India come to the temple for festivals or worship, they can't believe their eyes,

says tour guide Beth Kulkarni. "What they experience here makes them feel like they're back home again," she says.

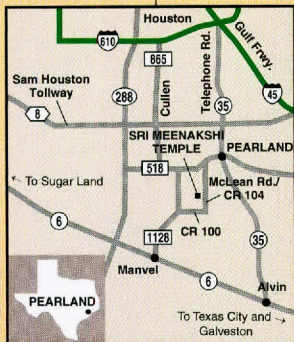
Robert Arnett, an author and lecturer on India, couldn't agree more. His recent award-winning book of essays and photographs, *India Unveiled*, chronicles his 18-month odyssey studying India's art, culture, and religions. "Physically, Sri Meenakshi Temple looks very much the way temples look in southern India. But it's the spirit of the place that really impresses me. It surrounds you with a perceptible, peaceful feeling like what you experience in a beautiful natural setting such as a forest," he says. "And the spirit of the people at the temple...they're so devoted and proud of the authentic tradition they're carrying on in Texas."

Indeed, that spirit beckons to visitors of all faiths through these sculpture-clad towers, highly adorned statues, and lively festivals. Down a narrow lane along the upper Texas coast, Sri Meenakshi Temple comes as a jewel of a surprise. ★

Photojournalist RANDY MALLORY was especially moved when artisan M. Ramanathan ceremoniously gave him a finely detailed, sculpted elephant he had made and invited Randy to visit his home near Madras, India, to see other temples he has worked on.

Houston's "Little India"

Representing diverse cultures, religions, and languages, some 55,000 recent emigrants from India call the Houston area home. **Sri Meenakshi Temple**, one of several area Hindu temples, is south of Houston at Pearland. To reach the temple from Houston (about 14 miles from downtown), take Texas 288 south to Farm-to-Market Rd. 518. Turn left (east) on FM 518, and drive about 8 miles to McLean Rd. (CR 104). Turn right on McLean (by West Side Plaza Shopping Center), and go just over 2 miles to the temple. Hours: Mon-Thu 9-noon and 5-8, Fri 9-noon and 5-9, Sat-Sun 9-8. Most parts of the temple are wheelchair accessible.



and weekends with 2 weeks' advance notice. Visitors are welcome to take photographs.

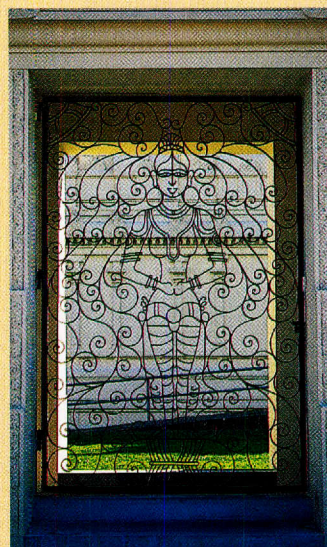
On Sep. 3 at 7 p.m., the temple hosts Janmashtami, celebrating the birth of Lord Krishna. On Sep. 11, an area-wide Birthday Party for Lord Krishna takes place from 7 p.m. to midnight at Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas (713/853-8000). Sponsored by Hindus of Greater Houston (call Poonam Kewalramani, 281/579-2954), the free festival features Indian music, dance, and foods.

On Oct. 17-25, Sri Meenakshi Temple holds a Navaratri festival honoring three goddesses, with special services each day at 8 a.m. A display of fancy dressed dolls depicting regional Indian dress and representing various deities will be on display during regular temple hours at no charge.

On Oct. 30 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., the temple celebrates Deepavali (or Diwali), the Festival of Lights, with a colorful bazaar (no admission charge) of Indian clothing and gifts for sale, plus Indian vegetarian snacks and sweets.

For further information on the temple and its events, write to Sri Meenakshi Temple, 17130 McLean Rd., Pearland 77584; 281/489-0358, ext. 100 or 110. Web site: www.meenakshi.org.

The temple welcomes Hindu and non-Hindu visitors. However, this is a religious site with guidelines—for example, you must remove your shoes before entering certain sacred areas. Check in at the office for guidance. Free guided tours will take place at 10 a.m. on July 18, Aug. 15, and Sep. 5. (Groups of 10 or more should call in advance.) Other tours generally are available weekday mornings



The north gate depicts a divine Guardian of the temple.

ing and gifts for sale, plus Indian vegetarian snacks and sweets.

For further information on the temple and its events, write to Sri Meenakshi Temple, 17130 McLean Rd., Pearland 77584; 281/489-0358, ext. 100 or 110. Web site: www.meenakshi.org.

Restaurants

Houston offers a number of Indian restaurants. **Bombay Palace Indian Restaurant** is at 3901 Westheimer; 713/960-8472. **India's Restaurant** is at 5704 Richmond Ave.; 713/266-0131. **Madras Pavilion** is at 3910 Kirby Dr.; 713/521-2617. **Pavani Madras Cuisine** is at 7320 Southwest Frwy.; 713/272-8259. **Taj Mahal Restaurant** is at 8328 Gulf Frwy.; 713/649-2818.

Dance and Music

On July 10 at 7:30 p.m., the **Anjali Center for Indian Performing Arts** (9725 Bissonnet, Houston 77036; 713/772-ARTS) presents local and Indian dancers in modernized classical Indian dance at the Jewish Community Center, 5601 S. Braeswood (S. Braeswood at Chimney Rock Rd.). Ticket prices: \$25, \$15, \$10 age 60 and older and students with ID. On Aug. 20 at 8 p.m., the center presents traditional classical Indian dances at Miller Outdoor Theater, in Hermann Park near the Houston Zoo. Admission: Free. On Sep. 10 at 8 p.m., the

Anjali Center joins New York's Battery Dance Company in modern and traditional Indian dance performances in the Wortham Center's Cullen Theater (600 Texas Ave. in downtown Houston). Ticket prices: \$50, \$30, \$15 age 60 and older and students with ID.

Each Sat. from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Houston radio station KELR/1070-AM (713/787-5367) broadcasts traditional Indian music.

Cricket Matches

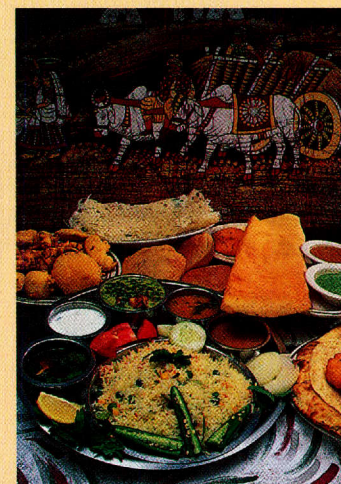
Each Sun., from the end of Apr. through early Oct. (excluding Aug.), from 11 a.m.-6 p.m., the Houston Cricket League sponsors matches between teams of local players from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the West Indies, South Africa, England, and Australia. The league final is Oct. 17, 1999. Games are held at Tombass Park (Texas 288 at Beltway 8). For details, call the league secretary, Keith Tushingam, at 713/513-2465.

Books

Look in your local library or bookstore for the award-winning *India Unveiled* by Robert Arnett, whose personal odyssey through India examines the country's religions and cultures. The book has 260 color photos and 7 maps. To order (\$45; includes shipping), write to Atman Press, 2525 Auburn Ave., #345-11, Columbus, Georgia 31906; 800/563-4198.



With its modern ceiling fans, a prayer hall in the temple makes a concession to coastal Texas heat and humidity.




The Thali dinner at Pavani Madras Cuisine in Houston features a variety of breads, deep-fried vegetables, rice, and piquant sauces.




The **LUTHER**
HOTEL

By Gene Fowler • Photographs by Rocky Kneten





This palace at Palacios welcomes guests with heaping helpin's of R&R, bayside walks, glorious sunsets, and saltwater fishing.

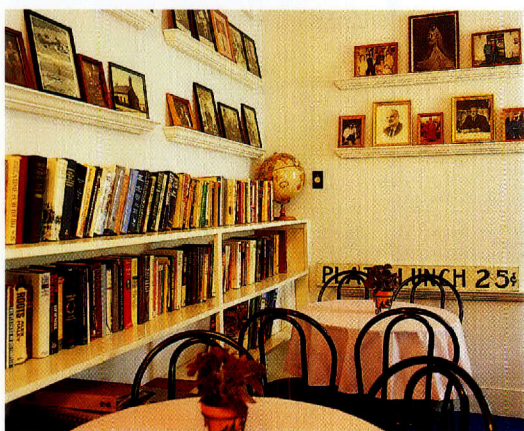


LEGEND holds that, centuries ago, as Spanish sailors explored an inlet of Matagorda Bay, they beheld a mirage of three palaces, shimmering on the shore. The mariners named the inlet for their New World apparition, and Tres Palacios Bay it remains today. Early in this century, when a bayside town sprang up, postal authorities lopped off two palaces and left the burg to prosper as Palacios.

More prosaic voices say the bay and town were named for José Félix Trespalacios, who served as Mexican governor of Texas in 1822 and 1823. They're probably correct, but if those hallucinating seamen had returned to the bay in 1905, they could have experienced their vision as reality. For in that year, an enormous hotel was moved from Palacios' eastern edge to its southern shore, one-half mile away. Cut into three sections for the mule-powered trip, the wandering inn must surely have resembled the three palaces of Spanish legend.

Reassembled and expanded with loving care, the old Bay View Hotel became the Hotel Palacios. Today, this palace at Palacios welcomes guests as the Luther Hotel, having weathered not only the usual ravages of a century, but also several hurricanes and a 1944 fire that damaged its upper two stories.

[FACING PAGE] Judy and Jim Lingenhag of San Antonio relax on the Luther Hotel's friendly front porch.
[TOP] Almost like home. The Luther lobby immediately welcomes guests with its warm, cozy feel.



The Palacios City Townsite Company had built the hotel in 1903, to pamper land buyers arriving on the newly laid extension of the Southern Pacific rail line to Palacios. Contractor D.D. Rittenhouse brought longleaf yellow pine and cypress from Louisiana, and the sturdy woods get partial credit for the structure's longevity. After the move to its present bayfront location in 1905, the hotel became a social center for the growing town. A resident orchestra played in the ballroom. Guests feasted in the hotel dining room. The seaside hostelry advertised that no mosquitoes would detract from the pleasures of "Boating and Regattas," "Fishing and Sea Breezes," or the "Bathing and Amusement Pavilion."

As the years passed, though, the neglect of a series of out-of-town owners led to a decline in the hotel's condition. In 1936, a local couple, Charles and Elsie Luther, purchased the huge building and began restoration and improvements. "The title was a mess," Charles said at the time. "It took four years and a trip to visit owners in every state in the nation except Washington and Oregon to get it straight according to Texas law." The Luthers installed plumbing in every room of the hotel but had to tear down the dilapidated dining room and ballroom. They also dismantled most of the hotel's "Longest Front Porch in Texas," well over 300 feet, saving the cypress boards for the 11-unit tourist court they built on the west side of the five-acre grounds. Charles and Elsie formally reopened the renovated Luther Hotel on their 20th wedding anniversary, April 20, 1941.

[TOP] The historic inn, built in 1903 and moved to its present location in 1905, offers a classic Gulf Coast experience.

[ABOVE] A nice way to start your day. Enjoy breakfast among the books and historical photos in the hotel's library/coffee shop.



Very near the hotel, the Palacios Pavilion, in its third configuration because of hurricanes, continues as a community landmark.

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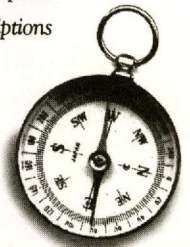
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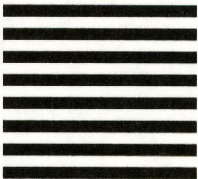
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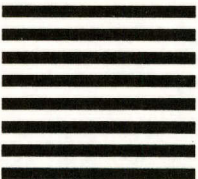
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HIGHWAYS
The Travel Magazine of Texas

Moonlight Bay

AND Paper Moon B&Bs

Next door to the Luther, and also facing the bay, Gaye and Earl Hudson operate Moonlight Bay and Paper Moon bed and breakfasts. Moonlight Bay, in a 1910 home known as the Cates-Price House, offers rooms with song-title names like Moonlight and Roses, Moonglow, Ebbtide, and Stardust. The home's recently dedicated historical marker states that the house is an unusual example of the Craftsman Bungalow architectural style because of its "side-gabled roof and second story with dormers and veranda." The marker also notes that the house "was a showplace and hosted such guests as former Texas Governor Pat Neff." The home remained a private residence until 1994, when Earl and Gaye opened it to the public.

Earl enjoys pointing out the home's architectural and decorative features, such as French pocket doors, original crystal chandeliers, and the square door-knob on the front door. "On Fridays and Saturdays at 4 p.m.," he says, "we serve tea while Gaye plays music from the 1940s on the Moonlight Bay grand piano."

Art Deco and oriental décor accent the literary themes of some of the Hudsons' favorite books in their Paper Moon B&B, adjacent to Moonlight Bay. Paper Moon's three bedrooms—named for *A Gift From the Sea* by Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and *The Sandpiper* by Martin Banshoff—fea-



Moonlight Bay B&B, in the 1910 Cates-Price House, has welcomed travelers since 1994.

ture trompe l'oeil murals, by Austin artist Roberta St. Paul, that evoke images from the books.

"Come see us anytime," says Earl, "and especially in late October, when our pecan trees are full of migrating monarch butterflies."

—Gene Fowler

The Luthers planted the now-stately palm trees that line the inn's semi-circular driveway, as well as the grand magnolia that shades the west side of the porch. Charles Luther credited the sturdy palms with protecting his hotel from hurricane-strewn debris.

During World War II, USO shows for soldiers stationed at Camp Hulen, the nearby U.S. Army base, brought celebrities like Bob Hope, Phil Harris, and Tex Beneke to the inn. The framed photos of movie stars Rita Hayworth and Carole Landis that hang in the Luther's lobby were taken in the hotel. Harry James, Guy Lombardo, and other famous musicians brought their big bands to the grand, glassed-in Palacios Pavilion, built on a pier over the bay. Twice destroyed by hurricanes, the pavilion today is a more modest structure, a concession to nature's supremacy.

Charles and Elsie Luther are gone now, but the all-in-the-family spirit they created still fills the big white hotel. Owned by the Luthers' daughter, Claire Joy Findley, and her husband, Jack, the homey inn is operated by Claire's cousin, Dolly Hamlin, and Dolly's husband, Billy. "My mother and Elsie were



Gulf breezes can shape not only plants like this striking windswept hackberry on the hotel's west side, but visitors and residents alike.



A lovely crepe myrtle thrives in Palacios' Gulf Coast sun-and-sea environment.

sisters,” explains Dolly. “They grew up in Johnson City and knew Lyndon Johnson.” That last tidbit explains the mini-museum of autographed photos of LBJ, Sam Rayburn, and other Texas statesmen in the Luther’s combination coffee room and library.

“Many of our guests are from Houston and San Antonio,” says Dolly. “They come to get away from the city.” Guests relish the heaping helpin’s of R&R, bay-side walks, glorious sunsets, and saltwater fishing for redfish and speckled trout. “We also have a lot of guests from other states and overseas,” she adds, displaying a register with names from France, Germany, and Switzerland. “A couple from China stayed with us recently. They bought two buildings in Palacios as a wholesale factory outlet for the dolls they manufacture—and they gave everyone in the hotel a doll.”

Perennial guest Jean Noffsinger of Michigan—who celebrated her 84th birthday at the Luther last March—has called the hotel her winter home for 26 years, except for one recent year when her husband passed away. “He used to love driving out into the countryside and gathering pecans,” she recalls. “Now, I come back for the friendliness. It’s a good place for a single lady. When I got sick here, they looked after me and brought me soup, tea, and toast. And the Palacios Senior Center will pick you up, take you to the center for a party, and bring you back to the hotel.”



Baywatch—it's been a Palacios pastime for decades. The Luther's penthouse porch offers a pleasing view of Tres Palacios Bay, the pavilion, pier, bay walk, and the hotel's front lawn.

Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay

Palacios (puh-LASH-us) is on Texas 35, about 56 miles southeast of Victoria, halfway between Houston and Corpus Christi.

Write to the Palacios Chamber of Commerce, 312 Main, Palacios 77465; 361/972-2615 or 800/611-4567. **The area code is 361; the zip code is 77465.** Web site: www.palacioschamber.com.

The **Luther Hotel** is on South Bay Blvd., between 4th and 5th streets. Some rooms include kitchens. Rates: \$55-\$140; weekly and monthly rates available.



© KELLEYGRAPHICS

The hotel is wheelchair accessible via the rear door, but there is no elevator. None of the rooms have telephones (telecommunications

co-dependents will find a pay phone in the hall), and only two have televisions. Devoted TV junkies can enjoy favorite programs in the homey confines of the Luther

lobby, but take our word for it: The view of the bay from the hotel is better than anything on cable. Write to the Luther Hotel, 408 South Bay Blvd., Palacios; 972-2312; fax 972-3425. *Reservations recommended.*

In addition to fast-food franchises, Palacios eateries include **Shimek's** (barbecue, burgers, chicken-fried steak; 972-3821), **Yang Chow** (Asian cooking; 972-2724), and **Palacios Mexican Restaurant** (Mexican food, seafood, steaks; 972-2766). You can also get monster dips of Blue Bell ice cream for \$1 each at **C&B Video** (972-2309).

Moonlight Bay and Paper Moon B&Bs are just west of the Luther. Rates: \$65-\$140; includes a full gourmet breakfast served



Float your boat. A mailbox near the harbor in Palacios suggests home port advantage.

at 9 in the formal dining room at Moonlight Bay. Gourmet dinners are available to room guests at \$19.95 per person,

plus tax and gratuity. *No guests under 18. Reservations recommended.* The Great Gatsby room is wheelchair accessible. Write to Moonlight Bay and Paper Moon at 506 South Bay Blvd., Palacios; 972-2232, or toll-free at 877/461-7070. Web site: www.bbhost.com/moonlightbaybb.

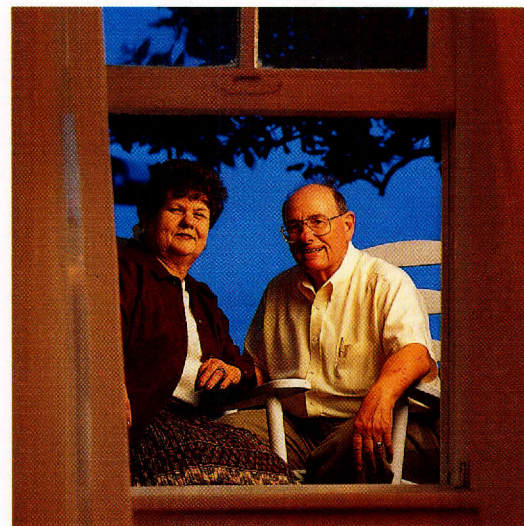
Last spring, Alaskan Hannah Frenier wrote to the *Victoria Advocate* that her overnight stay at the Luther had “turned into a two-month winter Texan experience due to the graciousness of Billy and Dolly Hamlin.” Traveling Pete Pedro of Mount Vernon, Ohio, echoes that sentiment. In 1996, after his son-in-law was transferred to a job in Freeport, Pete took a long Lone Star automobile cruise. “I drove from Ennis to Brownsville, and this place appealed to me the most,” says Pete. “It’s so peaceful and quiet—I spent two hours just walking around the first day I was here.” Pete even pitched in to help with the Luther’s massive 1998 Christmas tree. “It took four of us just to get it inside,” he says.

The hotel does not provide dinner, but an occasional potluck supper with the Hamlins and their guests can be rewarding, given the geographic mixture. And so folks won’t miss the morning fishing, the Hamlins lay out the complimentary breakfast treats early. “Starting at 5:30,” says Billy, “we have coffee, juice, sweet rolls, cereal, newspapers, and lots of conversation.”

It’s those simple things that keep folks coming back. “We offer an old-time atmosphere combined with modern-day living,” adds Billy. “The Luther Hotel really is like one big happy family.” ★

GENE FOWLER previously shared his affinity for the Gulf Coast by covering the Intra-coastal Waterway in January 1997, the *La Belle* excavation in November 1997, the Hotel Blessing Coffee Shop in January 1998, and Port Arthur in February 1999. He slept like a petrified log at the Luther Hotel.

Houston photographer ROCKY KNETEN found the Luther Hotel most hospitable. During a previous visit to Palacios, he got stuck in a Texas-size thunderstorm, complete with hailstones.



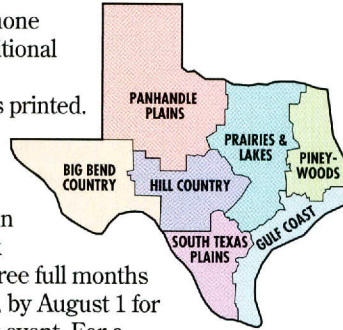
Luther Hotel managers Dolly and Billy Hamlin, the perfect hosts, will look in on you to make sure your visit is satisfying.

Fun Forecast

August 1999						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

In Fun Forecast, we provide events and telephone numbers for next month, so that you'll have additional time to plan your outings.

Sometimes dates change after the magazine is printed. Before you drive miles to an event, confirm the date by calling the number listed next to the festivity or by contacting the local chamber of commerce. If you wish to submit an event for Fun



Forecast, please send the information to Fun Forecast, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009; fax 512/486-5879. Submit information at least three full months before the first of the month in which the event will take place (for example, by August 1 for November festivities). Space is limited, so we may not be able to print every event. For a quarterly, more detailed schedule of events, write for a free *Texas Events Calendar*, Box 149249, Austin 78714-9249, or fax 512/486-5944.

Texas Highways' Web site (www.texashighways.com) includes an expanded Fun Forecast that gives descriptions of the events.

For free routing assistance or details on any destination in Texas, call 800/452-9292 toll-free from anywhere in the United States and Canada, any day between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Central Time. A travel counselor at one of the state's travel information centers will be on the line to provide travel information, send brochures, and advise you of any emergency road conditions.

Panhandle Plains

1
ABILENE
(began Jul 30)
Arts & Crafts Show
915/676-6211

AMARILLO
(began Jul 29)
Grand Ole
Auto Tour
806/655-3076

LEVELLAND
(began Jul 31)
Hot Burrito &
Bluegrass Festival
806/894-3157

POST
(began Jul 30)
Old Mill
Trade Days
806/495-3529

1-15
LUBBOCK
Lubbock Lake
Landmark
Archeology Tours
806/742-1116

1-21
AMARILLO
(began Jun 24)
"Can't Get
Enough of Texas"
Musical Tribute
806/355-9991

CANYON
(began Jun 9)
Texas
806/655-2181

2-7
HEREFORD
Town & Country
Jamboree
806/364-3333

2-7
SWEETWATER
Jr Rodeo
915/235-5488 or
800/658-5488

3
QUANAH
Stick Horse Rodeo
& Clown Contest
940/663-2222

3-7
OLTON
Sandhills
Celebration
806/285-2292

3, 10, 17, 24, 31
WICHITA FALLS
Outdoor Concert
940/761-7490

5
WICHITA FALLS
Rumpelstiltskin
940/692-5005

5-7
DALHART
XIT Rodeo
& Reunion
806/249-5646
or 249-5551

PLAINS
Old Settlers
Reunion & Rodeo
806/456-2288

6
QUANAH
Rodeo Parade
& Barbecue
940/663-2222

6-7
BIG SPRING
Sacred Heart
Catholic Church
Festival
915/263-7884

6-7
DALHART
Arts & Crafts Show
806/249-4434

QUANAH
Rodeo
940/663-2222

7
DALHART
Fiddlers Contest
806/244-5646

SILVERTON
Caprock Jamboree
806/823-2524

7-8
AMARILLO
Arts & Crafts Show
972/772-3816

8
QUANAH
Team Roping
940/663-2222

12
ABILENE
Artwalk
915/677-8389

OLNEY
'50s Music
at the Gazebo
940/564-5445

13-14
VERNON
Summer's
Last Blast
800/687-3137

14-15
ABILENE
Arts & Crafts Show
915/676-6211

14-15
VERNON
Classic Auto
Street Cruise,
Auction, &
Swap Meet
800/670-5664

18-21
PAMPA
Army Air Field
Reunion
806/665-3993

20
VERNON
Celebrate
Jazz Great
Jack Teagarden
940/553-1848

WICHITA FALLS
Gospel Revue
940/553-3158
or 723-9037

20-21
ELECTRA
Rodeo & Parade
940/495-4580

JACKSBORO
Barbecue Cookoff
940/567-2674

WICHITA FALLS
Texas Ranch
Roundup
940/691-1723 or
800/799-MPEC

20-22
HAPPY
Happy Days
806/558-2121

21
AMARILLO
Polk St
Block Party
806/373-7800

21
CLAUDE
Music of
Scott Joplin
806/226-2451

JACKSBORO
Car Show
940/374-3223

LEVELLAND
Cowboy Ball
806/894-3157

PALO PINTO
Trades Day
940/659-4313

PETERSBURG
Petersburg Day
806/667-3625

SLATON
Opry
806/828-6238

VERNON
Vernon Burnin'
Bike Ride
& Road Race
940/552-2564 or
800/687-3137

26-29
WICHITA FALLS
Hotter 'N Hell
Hundred
Bike Race/Festival
940/322-3223

28
BIG SPRING
Pioneer Day
915/267-8255

LOCKNEY
Old-Fashioned
Saturday
806/652-3548

28
SLATON
Augustfest
806/828-6238

VERNON
Ablaze with Praise
940/553-3158

30-Sep 4
BIG SPRING
Howard Co Fair
915/264-0625

Prairies and Lakes

1
CLEBURNE
(began Jul 30)
Hot Air Balloon
Festival
817/645-2455

FORT WORTH
(began Jul 20)
Natl Cutting Horse
Summer Show
817/871-8150

GRAND PRAIRIE
KRVA
Family
Fun Day
972/647-2331

SEGUIN
(began Jul 29)
The King and I
830/379-6382 or
800/580-7322

SOUTHLAKE
Lizz
817/283-3406

WEATHERFORD
(began Jul 30)
Trade Days
817/594-3801
or 598-4351

1-7
GLEN ROSE
(began Jul 30)
Team Roping
254/897-4509 or
817/279-9912

1-8
DALLAS
(began Jul 28)
Ringling Bros and
Barnum & Bailey
Circus
214/939-2800

GRANBURY
(began Jul 8)
West Side Story
817/573-9191
or 572-0881

ROUND TOP
(began Jul 15)
Shakespeare
at Winedale
409/278-3530

1, 15
RICHARDSON
Community Band
Concert
972/385-2999

ROCKNE
Horse Play Day
512/303-2828
or 303-9609

1, 7-8, 14-15
BRYAN
(began Jul 31)
Harvest Weekend
409/778-9463

1-15
ARLINGTON
(began Jul 15)
*Five Women
Wearing the
Same Dress*
817/275-7661

1-15
FORT WORTH
(began Jul 16)
Attitude
817/338-4411

1-31
GLEN ROSE
(began Jun 4)
The Promise
800/687-2661

2
DALLAS
Light Crust
Doughboys
214/821-1860

2-7
DE LEON
Peach & Melon
Festival
254/893-6600

4-7
PARIS
Rodeo
903/785-2522

5-7
LANCASTER
Lions Club
Carnival
972/298-4211

5-8
BASTROP
Homecoming
512/321-2419

5, 12, 19, 26
FORT WORTH
Legends
Car Racing
817/215-8500

6
GRAPEVINE
Don Irwin
Piano Concert
817/410-3185

6-8
BRENNHAM
Firemen's Fiesta
409/836-3695 or
888/273-6426

7
HEARNE
Hang Gliding
Competition
409/279-2351

7
BELLVILLE
Market Day
on the Square
409/865-3407

1, 7-8, 14-15
BRYAN
(began Jul 31)
Harvest Weekend
409/778-9463

1-15
DE LEON
Golden Saturday
254/893-2083

Melon Patch
Bicycle Tour
254/893-1360

7
DECATUR
Antique Car Show
940/627-5185

MAXDALE
(approx. 12 mi S of
Killeen via FM 440
and FM 2670)
Chili Cookoff
254/690-3134

SALADO
Tablerock's
Goodnight
Dinner Theater
254/947-9205

TERRELL
Historical Tour
972/563-5703 or
877/837-7355

7-8
SALADO
Art Fair
254/947-5040

7-14
FORT WORTH
American
Quarter Horse
Show
817/871-8150

7, 14, 21, 28
COLUMBUS
Opry
409/732-9210
or 732-6510

DENTON
Acoustic Lawn Jam
940/349-8529

STEPHENVILLE
Cross Timbers
Country Opry
254/964-4132

8
MAXDALE
(see directions
above)
Chili Cookoff
254/698-6556

9-14
ALVARADO
Pioneers &
Old Settlers
Reunion
817/790-6667

11-15
FORT WORTH
Ringling Bros and
Barnum & Bailey
Circus
817/884-2222

12-14
DECATUR
Wise Co
Sheriff's Posse
Rodeo
940/627-3107

12-14, 19-22
DENTON
Big River
940/382-1915



Flag down a sombrero and enjoy San Antonio's Texas Folklife Festival, August 5-8.

12-Sep 6 GRANBURY Singin' in the Rain 817/573-9191	14-15 RICHARDSON DFW Sports Collectors 972/238-4190	21 CLIFTON Trades Day 254/675-3720
13-14 GLEN ROSE Cutting Horse Show 254/796-2648	SEGUIN Quarter Horse Show 830/379-6382	HALLETTSVILLE Lions Club Carnival 361/798-3522
13-15 ARLINGTON Country Peddler Arts & Crafts Show 817/459-5000	14-15, 21-22, 28-29 ROANOKE Hawkwood Medieval Fantasy Faire 817/430-4102 or 800/782-3629	SULPHUR SPRINGS Cutting Horse Show 903/885-8071
FORT WORTH Train Collectors Show 817/884-2222	15 BRENHAM Ice Cream Smorgasbord 409/836-3695 or 888/273-6426	22 FLATONIA Sts Cyril & Methodius Church Picnic 512/865-2222
14 ANDERSON Stagecoach Rides 409/873-2633	FLATONIA Prazka Pout & Praha Feast 512/865-3560	GRAND PRAIRIE Low Rider Show 972/647-2331
ARLINGTON Al Green 817/530-6050	WEIMAR St. Michael's Church Harvest Feast 409/725-9511 or 725-6714	SNOOK VFD Barbecue 409/272-3732
Scale Models Super Contest 817/465-6661	17 LOCKHART Country Music Jamboree 512/376-3430	23 LOCKHART Opry 512/601-2154
CALDWELL Old Theater Peddlers Market 409/272-3404	SHERMAN Preservation League Lecture Series 903/893-4067	24-28 PARIS Red River Valley Fair & Exposition 903/785-7971
CLEBURNE Pro Bull Rodeo 817/244-9851	19-22 HICO Auto Swap Meet 800/361-4426	24-31 DALLAS Ragtime 214/373-8000
LANCASTER Second Saturday on the Square 972/227-6714	20-22 LEWISVILLE Highland Village Hot Air Balloon Festival 800/657-9571	26 HURST Bluebonnet Brass 817/283-3406
LEWISVILLE Chili Cookoff 972/219-3550	20-27 GLEN ROSE Elite Barrel Racing Futurity Jackpot 817/477-5848	27-29 CANTON Auto Swap Meet 254/734-3194 or 800/229-2314
PARIS Red River Valley Bluegrass Jam 903/785-5394	20-28 DENTON North Texas Fair & Rodeo 940/387-2632	MADISONVILLE Madison Co Trade Days 409/349-0163
SEGUIN Seguin Birthday Celebration 830/379-6382	20-Sep 8 FORT WORTH Rough Crossing 817/784-9378	28 GONZALES Courthouse Trade Days 830/672-6532
WACO Greater Waco Duck Festival 254/772-7600	21 BONHAM Lake Bonham Country Music Show 903/683-4731	28-29 NAVASOTA Trade Days 409/825-8490
WALNUT SPRINGS Trades Day 254/797-2176 or 797-4019	28-Sep 1 BEAUMONT (began Jul 31) Craft Show 409/892-6999	SULPHUR SPRINGS Cutting Horse Show 903/885-8071
14-15 CALVERT Antique Show & Celebration 409/364-2933	28 HARLINGEN (began Jul 30) Sunday in the Park with George 956/412-PLAY	4-6 NEW BOSTON Pioneer Days 903/628-2851
DALLAS Buchanan's Antique/Collector Market 405/478-4050	4-7 QUITMAN Old Settlers Reunion 903/763-2701	7-8 HENDERSON Sacred Harp Singing 903/657-0304 or 657-5528
FORT WORTH Yellow Rose Ford Auto Classic 214/373-4835	5-7 CONROE PRCA Rodeo 409/760-1666	13-15 NACOGDOCHES Millard's Flea Market 409/564-4490
	14 KIRBYVILLE Country Music Show 409/423-5744	14 WOODVILLE "Ghosts of Texas Past" Storytelling 800/442-8951
	17-21 ATLANTA Forest Festival 903/796-6615	17-21 CROCKETT Fiddlers Festival 409/544-2359
	20-22 TEXARKANA Summerfest 903/547-3223	21-22 TYLER Trade Days 903/595-2223
	26-28 MARSHALL Rodeo 903/935-3121	20-22 NACOGDOCHES Trade Days 409/564-2150



Smoke on the water. Catch the Lakefest Drag Boat Races in Marble Falls, August 13-15.

<p>1 HOUSTON Aztec Lowrider Car Show 231/890-5500</p> <p>KEMAH (began Jul 30) Blessing of the Fleet 231/333-4374</p> <p>PORT ARANSAS (began Jul 31) Hope Devlin Kids' Fishing Tournament 361/749-4096 or 749-5314</p> <p>SOUTH PADRE ISLAND (began Jul 28) Texas International Fishing Tournament 956/943-TIFF</p> <p>1-14 GALVESTON (began Jun 12) <i>Tales of Galveston</i> 409/763-4591</p> <p>1-22 CORPUS CHRISTI (began Jun 3) Surfin' Art 361/980-3500</p>	<p>3 WHARTON Crescent Jamboree 409/677-8350</p> <p>3, 10, 17, 24, 31 GALVESTON Summer Band Concerts 409/766-1138 or 744-2174</p> <p>5-7 PORT LAVACA <i>No!</i> <i>A Million Times</i> <i>No!</i> 361/552-5511</p> <p>6 PORT ARANSAS Sunset Sounds: Music in the Park 512/749-4158</p> <p>VICTORIA International Food Fair 361/572-4300</p> <p>6-7 ORANGE Fishing Tournament 409/886-1363</p>	<p>6-8 HOUSTON International Jazz Festival 713/839-7000 or 800/231-2299</p> <p>WINNIE Old Time Trade Days 409/296-3300 or 892-4000</p> <p>6-7, 13-14, 20-21, 27-28 MANVEL Opry 281/489-1716 or 331-1786</p> <p>7 PORT ARANSAS Joyce Ryan: Watercolor Painting Demonstration 210/494-0077</p> <p>ROCKPORT KidsFest 512/729-6445</p> <p>8 PORT ARTHUR Second Sunday at Texas Artists Museum 409/983-4881</p>	<p>13-14 HITCHCOCK Good Ole Days Barbecue Cookoff 409/986-9224</p> <p>PORT ARANSAS Fishing Tournament 361/749-5252</p> <p>14 BEAUMONT Texas Fire Museum Car Show 409/880-3927</p> <p>14-15 HOUSTON Hot Tejano Weekend 281/890-5500</p> <p>ROSENBERG Festival of Glass & Antique Show 281/342-4876 or 713/729-4267</p> <p>20 VICTORIA Country Opry 361/552-9347</p> <p>20-21 HITCHCOCK Good Ole Days Festival 409/986-9224</p>	<p>20-22 CORPUS CHRISTI Country Paddler Show 830/952-2774</p> <p>FREESPORT Billfish Classic 409/233-2101</p> <p>21 BAHAM CITY Market Day 409/245-8333</p> <p>BEAUMONT Charlie Pruitt's Country Music Show 409/727-5555</p> <p>FREESPORT Shrimp Boil 409/233-4434</p> <p>LEAGUE CITY Bluegrass Show 713/990-5171</p> <p>21-22 CLEAR LAKE AREA Regattas & Amphibians at Armadillo Eggsou Nature Center 281/474-2551</p> <p>PORT ARTHUR Trade Days 409/982-4950</p>	<p>21-22 TEXAS CITY Trade Days 409/949-9273</p> <p>22 HOUSTON Custom Hot Rod Show 281/890-5500</p> <p>26 HUMBLE Business & Health Expo 281/446-2128</p> <p>27 PORT ARANSAS Beachwalk Adventure 361/749-4158 or 749-4111</p> <p>27-29 CLEAR LAKE AREA NASA Johnson Space Center Ballunar Liftoff Festival 281/488-7676</p> <p>28 GALVESTON ArtWalk 409/763-4403</p>	<p>28 HARLINGEN Sock Hop 956/425-2705</p> <p>TEXAS CITY Shrimp Boil & Dance 888/860-1408</p> <p>28-29 BEAUMONT Soccer Classic 409/654-3099</p> <p>Tennis Classic 409/727-0159</p> <p>VICTORIA Craft Fair 361/767-9333</p> <p>29 VICTORIA Splash & Dash Triathlon 361/575-6366</p> <p>South Texas Plains</p> <p>1 SAN ANTONIO (began Jul 11) Firelight Players Performance 210/227-5867</p>	<p>1 SAN ANTONIO (began Jul 31) Hornsby Jazz, Blues, & Poetry Festival 210/393-3328</p> <p>1-28 SAN ANTONIO (began Jul 9) <i>Grease</i> 210/734-4646</p> <p>3 THREE RIVERS Brush Country Jamboree 512/449-1349 or 361/786-3334</p> <p>5-8 SAN ANTONIO Texas Folklife Festival 210/458-2300</p> <p>7 BEEVILLE Market Day 361/358-3267</p> <p>PHARR Pharr Night Out 956/787-1484</p>	<p>14 BIGFOOT Second Saturday Market Trail 830/663-2419 or 665-5054</p> <p>COTULLA Market Trail Day 830/709-3726</p> <p>DILLEY Market Trail Day 830/709-3726</p> <p>GOLIAD Market Day 512/645-3563 or 800/848-8674</p> <p>LYTLE Market Trail Day 830/709-3726</p> <p>MACDONA Market Trail Day 830/709-3726</p> <p>MOORE Market Trail Day 830/709-3726</p> <p>PEARSALL Market Trail Day 830/709-3726</p> <p>VON ARMY Market Trail Day 830/709-3726</p>
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19 SAN ANTONIO Botanical Center Concert Under the Stars 210/207-3255
20 SAN ANTONIO Gartenkonzert 210/222-1521
20-21 PLEASANTON Cowboy Homecoming 830/569-2163
20-22 EAGLE PASS Kickapoo Lucky Eagle Casino Celebration 888/255-8259
21 PHARR Health Fair 956/781-1481
Hill Country
1-8 AUSTIN (began Jul 9) <i>Hay Fever</i> 512/472-5143
INGRAM Cowboy Camp Meeting 830/792-6300
1-14 AUSTIN (began Jul 10) <i>Big River</i> 512/479-9491
ROUND ROCK (began Jul 23) <i>Prisoner of Second Avenue</i> 512/244-0440
1-29 AUSTIN (began Jun 1) <i>Beehive</i> 512/476-0541
1, 8, 15, 22, 29 AUSTIN <i>River City Flyer Steam Train</i> 512/477-8468
2-6 KERRVILLE Heart of the Hills Golf Tournament 830/257-4982
3, 10 BANDERA Cowboy Capital Rodeo 800/364-3833

5, 12 BURNET Devil's Waterhole Canoe Tour 512/793-2223
6-7 CAMP WOOD Old Settlers Reunion 830/597-6241 or 597-4127
OZONA Jr Rodeo 915/392-3737
6-8 ILANO Motorcycle Rally 915/247-5354
6, 13, 20, 27 BANDERA Twin Elm Rodeo 888/567-3049
7 AUSTIN Kars for Kids Corvette Show 512/338-1806
HONDO Hootenanny 830/426-3438
OZONA Davy Crockett Birthday Festival 915/392-3737
SAN SABA Country Peddlers Day 915/372-5294
WIMBERLEY Market Day 512/847-8653 or 847-2201
7, 14, 21, 28 BANDERA Oxbow Rodeo 830/460-8329
11-28 INGRAM <i>A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum</i> 830/367-5121
13 GEORGETOWN Pop Goes the Jazz 512/869-7469
13-14 JUNCTION PRCA Rodeo 915/446-3190
LAMPASAS Quilt Show 512/556-8377
13-15 MARBLE FALLS Lakefest Drag Boat Races 830/693-4449 or 800/759-8178
14 BURNET Market Day 512/756-4297

14 CASTROVILLE Market Trail Day 830/741-3841
COMFORT Tish Hinojosa/ Darden Smith Concert 830/995-2398
D'HANIS Market Trail Day 830/709-3726
DEVINE Market Trail Day 830/709-3726
ELDORADO Schleicher Co Day 915/853-3109
GEORGETOWN Market Day 512/930-5302
Opry 512/869-7469
HONDO Market Trail Day 830/709-3726
LA COSTE Market Trail Day 830/709-3726
LAGO VISTA Founders Day Celebration 512/267-7952
LAMPASAS Indian Artifact Show 512/556-5172

14 NATALIA Market Trail Day 830/709-3726
SISTERDALE VFD Barbecue 830/324-6737
YANCEY Market Trail Day 830/709-3726
14-15, 28-29 FREDERICKSBURG Gillespie Co Fairgrounds Horse Racing 830/997-2359
18-21 SONORA Sutton Co Days 915/387-2880
19 NEW BRAUNFELS Comal Country Music Show 830/629-4547
21 BLANCO Market Day 830/833-2201
DOSS Community Fair 830/997-6523
NEW BRAUNFELS Model Train Show 830/629-2943

21 TAYLOR International Barbecue Cookoff 512/365-1988
21-22 AUSTIN Capitol Art Society Show 512/327-5744
City-Wide Garage Sale 877/840-3829
GRUENE Market Days 830/629-6441
21, 28 TOW Grape Stomp Festival 915/247-5354
22 CASTROVILLE St Louis Day 830/538-2267
27 STONEWALL LBJ Birthday Celebration 830/644-2252
27-29 FREDERICKSBURG Gillespie Co Fair 830/997-6523 or 997-2359

27-Sep 19 AUSTIN <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> 512/472-5143
28 AUSTIN Texas Bamboo Festival 512/929-9565
BIG LAKE Santa Rita Day Celebration 915/884-2980
Big Bend Country
1 EL PASO Los Tres Reyes 915/541-4481
(began Jul 30) Ysleta St Festival 915/859-7913
FORT DAVIS (began Jul 30) Davis Mountains Hummingbird Roundup 915/426-3015 or 800/524-3015
1, 8 MIDLAND Sunday Lawn Concert 915/570-7770

1-28 EL PASO (began Jun 3) <i>Viva El Paso!</i> 915/565-6900
1, 8, 15, 22, 29 EL PASO Music Under the Stars 915/532-7273
1-Sep 4 MIDLAND (began Jun 18) Summer Mummers: <i>Meteor Crater Madness</i> 915/570-4011
5 MIDLAND Centennial Plaza Summer in the City 915/687-1149
5-8 MONAHANS Butterfield Overland Stagecoach & Wagon Festival 915/943-2187
5, 19 FORT STOCKTON Live Music at Annie Riggs Museum 915/336-2167

6-7, 13-14 EL PASO <i>You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown</i> 915/778-6170
6, 13, 20, 27 ODESSA Back Porch Swing: Music at the Presidential Museum 915/332-7123
7 MIDLAND "Remembrance of War" Series 915/563-1000
ODESSA Brand New Oprea 915/332-1586
VAN HORN Old Car Festival 915/283-2682
8 EL PASO New World Drums 915/541-4481
8-10 CLINT Fiesta de San Lorenzo 915/851-2255
15 EL PASO Los Folkloristas 915/541-4481

19-22 ODESSA Baker St Nights 915/332-1586 or 580-3177
20 MIDLAND Golf Tournament 915/682-2960
21 FORT STOCKTON Harvestfest 915/336-2541
MIDLAND YMCA Hoffman Memorial Tall City Triathlon 915/682-2551
21-22 FORT STOCKTON Golf Tournament 915/335-4600
22 EL PASO 82nd U.S. Army Band Concert 915/541-4481
23-29 MIDLAND Permian Basin Nike Open 915/580-4710
28 SHEFFIELD Fort Lancaster Living History Day 915/836-4391



Legendary conguero Poncho Sanchez and his Latin Jazz Band plays the Houston International Jazz Festival on August 7. The festival runs August 6-8.

COURTESY BEMO DRUMS, INC.

Ponds and Beyond

Call it Texan ingenuity: If you can't live near a babbling brook, you bring the babbling brook home. Pond-gardening, a growing trend nationwide, has attracted such interest in Texas that both the Dallas metroplex and the Austin area boast organizations dedicated to the pursuit. In July, they aim to show you why.

On July 17-18, the Austin Pond Society hosts its 5th Annual Pond Tour, unlatching the gates to some 30 local oases. From professionally designed gardens lush with water lilies and cattails, to small ponds lorded over by plastic pink flamingos, these water gardens have one thing in common: their ability to soothe frayed nerves and allow onlookers to marvel at nature's handiwork. For with just a little encouragement, urban ponds soon flourish with frogs, fish, luminescent dragonflies, butterflies, and birds of all sorts. Tour maps cost \$5 per day, or \$7.50 for both days; half of all proceeds benefit the Austin Area Garden Center. For more information, call the Austin Pond Society hotline, 512/896-6377, or check the Web site: www.ccsi.com/~sgray.

Up the Interstate in Big D and beyond, the North Texas Water Garden Society pulls out the stops for the 1999 Tour of Ponds on July 24-25. This tour features some 60 homes in the Metroplex, with water gardens ranging from naturalistic bog plantings to converted swimming pools with cascading falls. In addition to day tours of the gardens on Saturday and Sunday, a night tour (8-midnight on Sat.) allows their creators to showcase theatrical lighting effects. Maps (for both days, including the night tour) cost \$10. For more details, write to Box 9127, Dallas 75209, or call 972/783-0261 or 644-3144. Web site: www.ntwgs.org.

Embroidered shirts and jackets by Liberty Westerns of Austin recall the custom-made garments of Western-wear designers of the Forties.

STUDIO SEVEN PRODUCTIONS



Give Me Liberty

A few years ago, Chandler Liberty was singing with a country band whose members needed new costumes. Luckily for her band, their chanteuse liked to sew.

Today, the band's on the back burner, while Liberty Westerns, the Western-wear design company that Chandler runs from her bungalow in East Austin, takes the stage. Liberty Western shirts and jackets—embroidered with such designs as Day of the Dead cowboys (based on photos of Tom Mix) and sporting pearly snaps, ultrasuede appliques, and contrasting yokes and cuffs—recall the custom garments of such Western-wear designers as Rodeo Ben, N. Turk, and Nudie of Hollywood.

Chandler's eye for detail and her sense of whimsy have captivated clients such as the costume designer for Broadway's *Annie Get Your Gun*, who commissioned four shirts for star Tom Wopat. She has also collaborated with El Paso's Rockbuster Boots on several projects, fashioned duds for Austin's Cornell Hurd Band, and made fans of numerous fashion-conscious regular folks across the country.

A Liberty Western custom-

made shirt—plain, with contrasting yokes and cuffs, pearly snaps, and third-color piping—will run you about \$175. Embellished garments cost \$250 and up.

For more information, write to 1419 Westmoor Dr., Austin 78723; 512/454-7017.

Web site: libertywesterns.com.

Vital Organ Transplant

It sounds like an orchestra is playing in Sunland Park Mall in El Paso. So, follow the music to the food court, where you'll find 72-year-old organist Don Shearer, his slender hands flying over the three keyboards of the world's only original, working Wurlitzer Balaban III organ.

"An organ is nothing but a bunch of whistles," says Don. "Air blows through pipes and makes the sound. But if you get enough of them together, it makes a heck of a sound."

Indeed, it does. The organ's 961 wood and metal pipes, ranging in length from one inch

to 16 feet, produce the characteristic organ sound. Other effects come from a xylophone, a marimba, and what looks like a forest of brass trumpets tucked in among the pipes. Hanging above the organ is the "toy counter," a row of instruments that mimic sounds of sleigh bells, horses' hooves, thunder, castanets, and a train whistle—sounds used in silent-film days to highlight action on the screen.

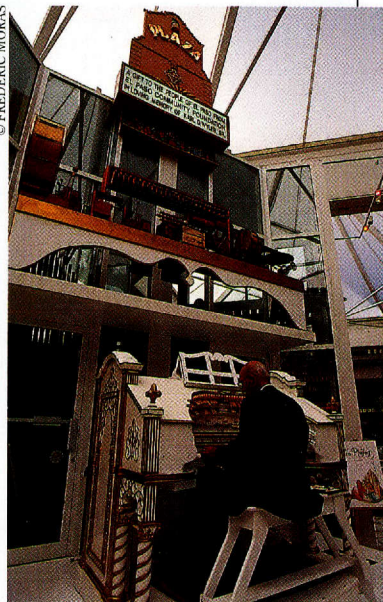
One of only six such organs made in the late Twenties by the Wurlitzer company, this instrument entertained audiences for six decades at the Plaza Theater in downtown El Paso, an "atmospheric" venue built in 1930. Closed in 1972, scheduled for demolition in 1987, then rescued by the El Paso Community Foundation shortly thereafter, the theater awaits restoration. Until then, the Wurlitzer has found a temporary home in the mall, where six volunteer organists give daily concerts.

Concerts take place each day 12:30-1 p.m. and 6:30-7 p.m. For further details, write to the El Paso Community Foundation at 201 E. Main, Ste. 1616, El Paso 79901; 915/533-4020.

Feting the Fourth

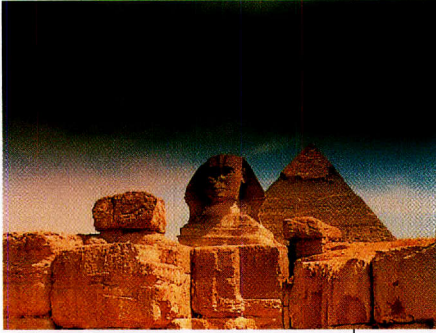
Ah, these wide, starry Texas skies: At no time do they glitter and gleam more than on the 4th of July, when they explode with Texas-size pyrotechnics. For a full listing of Independence Day fetes statewide, check our Web site: www.texashighways.com (look under Fun Forecast). Until then, here are a few to get you in the spirit.

At 9 p.m. on July 4 in **Amarillo**, revelers can tune in to patriotic tunes on KGNC (FM 98) and KACV (FM 90), then watch a troupe of sky divers descend upon Ross Rogers Golf Course. (The surrounding city parks are great viewing sites.) At 9:45,



Until the Plaza Theater in downtown El Paso is restored, the city's one-of-a-kind antique Wurlitzer organ entertains shoppers at Sunland Park Mall.

COURTESY HOUSTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE



Viewers soar high above Egypt's great pyramids of Giza in the new IMAX feature *Mysteries of Egypt*, produced by National Geographic Films.

Call 361/972-2600 or 800/611-4567.

By the Way...

Southwest Texas State University's Southwestern Writers Collection showcases memorabilia from its complete **Lonesome Dove Miniseries** archives through July 31. Fans can examine props, set designs, photographs, production notes, screenplay drafts, and costumes. ... call 512/245-2313.

"If I didn't start painting, I would have raised chickens," quipped Anna Mary Robertson "Grandma" Moses (1860-1961), on beginning her art career at age 78. Grandma Moses' depictions of life in rural New England—one-room schoolhouses, carts and buggies, rustic farmhouses, and other country scenes—are collected by galleries and museums worldwide. Through September 12, the LBJ Library and Museum in Austin presents **Grandma Moses: Painted Memories**, an exhibit of some 30 works, including oils, "yarn paintings," dolls she made for her grandchildren, and her painted worktable. ... call 512/916-5136.

a 20-minute pyrotechnic extravaganza begins. Call 806/345-3451 or 800/692-4052.

Canyon throws an all-day festival on July 3, beginning at 9 a.m. on the town square. Arts and crafts, games, and a huge parade at 11 kick off the day. At 7 p.m., the party moves to Connor Park, where folks picnic and tune in to music on KWTS (FM 91.1) until 10, when fireworks light up the sky. Call 806/374-1497 or 800/999-9481.

Corpus Christi's celebration begins around 3 p.m. on July 4 with a parade and patriotic ceremonies. Beginning around 6, concerts in three areas feature local and big-name musicians. The local symphony performs on the USS *Lexington* at 9, culminating in a breathtaking fireworks display over Corpus Christi Bay. Call 361/880-3461 or 880-3101.

Garland's three-day Star-Spangled Fourth festival (July 2-4) features a giant carnival, arts and crafts, nightly fireworks and laser-light shows, and entertainment by such stars as Lorrie Morgan, The Commodores, and The Supremes. Call 972/205-2749 or 888/879-0264.

Palacios begins its 50th Fourth of July Celebration on July 3 with bingo and a carnival on East Bay, then kicks into full gear on the 4th with a reenactment of La Salle's landing in 1685, helicopter rides, games, more carnival fun, food and craft booths, and a grand fireworks show over the bay.

This summer, take a trip to Egypt without leaving Texas, at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. The new IMAX film *Mysteries of Egypt* (through Oct. 14) takes viewers soaring over the great pyramids of Giza and into the shadowy chambers of King Tutankhamun's tomb. In the museum's permanent exhibit hall, *Searching for Eternity: Life and Death in Ancient Egypt* gives visitors a closeup look at such artifacts as a mummy, funerary statues, paintings, amulets, and jewelry. ... call 713/639-4629. Web site: www.hmns.org.

Interested in the Civil War? Be sure to send away for a free copy of the Texas Historical Association's *Texas in the Civil War*, a comprehensive guide to statewide sites related to the war in Texas. The guide includes a map to battle sites, cemeteries, routes, and camps; information about wartime Texas culture and economy; a timeline of events; photographs of Civil War artifacts; a list of museums, research centers, and historical markers across the state; and a list of Texas Civil War monuments in the South. ... call 512/463-6094, or send email to: civilwarbrochure@thc.state.tx.us.

Since their inception in 1931, the members of the Light Crust Doughboys have spread the gospel of Western Swing to everyone from post-

World War I revelers to the Nineties-era rockabilly crowd. Mel May Publications has recently published *The Light Crust Doughboys Songbook*, which contains the music for dozens of classic

and contemporary Doughboys songs, plus a 74-minute CD. The book/CD package costs \$26.45 (includes shipping);

Visit our Web site at <http://www.texashighways.com>

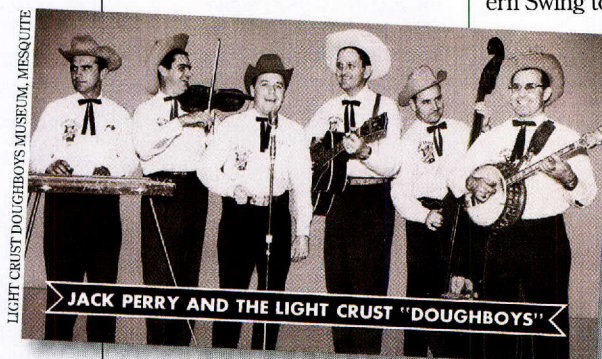
Texas residents, add \$1.78 tax). Call 972/285-5441 or 800/8-MEL-BAY. Web site: www.lightcrustdoughboys.com.

At the International Cultural Center Library at Texas Tech University in Lubbock through August 31, learn more about the complicated history of Bosnia-Herzegovina—without signing up for a political science class. *Bosnia-Herzegovina: From Turkish Province to NATO Protectorate* focuses on the region's history between the 18th and 20th centuries, offering books, folk art, videos, maps, photos, and storyboards for review and study. ... call 806/742-0431.

COURTESY LBJ LIBRARY/BENNINGTON MUSEUM



Folk artist Grandma Moses, who died in 1961, painted many of her works at this table, which she decorated in her signature style.



This publicity postcard shows a Light Crust Doughboys lineup from the Fifties. Band members often autographed cards like this as souvenirs for fans.

In Abilene, the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature has organized an exhibit of almost 50 original illustrations by writer-illustrator David Wiesner. *David Wiesner: Tuesday* (named for the author's 1992 Caldecott Award-winning book, *Tuesday*) appears at the Abilene Civic Center's Red Carpet Gallery through July 5, then travels to the Tyler Art Museum (July 17-Sep. 14) and the Dallas Museum of Art (Sep. 15-Nov. 21) ... call 915/673-4586. Web site: www.nccil.org.

TEXCETERA brings you readers' tips and timely travel tidbits. Because we're unable to check out every item in "Readers Recommend," and because details can change, we encourage you to call ahead for more information. When we mention new places, products, or publications, we try to include only those with promise; keep in mind, however, that problems can occur with start-up businesses.

If you run across a noteworthy Lone Star attraction, restaurant, event, or product, we'd love to hear about it. Write to Readers Recommend, *Texas Highways*, Box 141009, Austin 78714-1009. Email: editors@texashighways.com. Remember that space constraints prevent us from running every suggestion we receive. We reserve the right to edit items.

READERS RECOMMEND...

I recommend **The Boudain Hut** in **Port Arthur**. Pat LeBouef and Holly Wilson serve great boudain links and gumbo. Also, on band nights, you can sometimes hear Mary Arnold, granddaughter of Popeye Arnold [see "Port Arthur's Popeye," February 1999, page 15], singing renditions of Patsy Cline songs. To hear her sing, you may believe Patsy has been reincarnated!

Jimmie Root, Port Arthur

The Boudain Hut is at 5714 Gulfway Drive in Port Arthur; 409/962-5079. Band nights are Wednesday through Sunday.

My husband and I found we didn't need to have Slavic ancestry to enjoy the **Czech Heritage Museum** in **Temple**. Curator Dorothy Pechal makes this memorial to pioneer Texas Czechs come alive! The nearly 30-year-old museum helps preserve Czech cultural heritage in its tremendous collection of artifacts, including century-old puppets, woodcarvings, and models of old clipper ships [and] a library of some 23,000 volumes (18,000 in the Czech language). Thanks to the Slavonic Benevolent Order of the State of Texas (SPJST) for providing this wonderful insight into Texas history.

Marie and Henry Alsmeyer, Tyler

The Czech Heritage Museum is in the SPJST Insurance Co. Building, 520 North Main, Temple; 254/773-1575.

DYNAMIC DEPOTS

The **Slaton Railroad Heritage Association**, in cooperation with the **City of Slaton**, plans to restore the **Harvey House**, one of the few remaining Harvey House structures in the United States. Originally built as a restaurant in 1912, the two-story building served the community as a depot in its later years.

Scheduled to reopen in July 2000, the Harvey House will house a bus terminal, the **Slaton Museum's** growing railroad history collection, an eight-room hotel, and a restaurant. Write to the Slaton City Hall, Attention Mitch Grant, 130 South 9th Street, Slaton 79364; 806/828-2000.

In **Fort Worth**, artisans are restoring the interior of the 68-year-old **Texas & Pacific Railroad passenger terminal** to its former glory. The building, designed in an Art Deco architectural style known as "Cowtown Moderne," sits at the corner of West Lancaster and Throckmorton streets on the southern edge of downtown. Restoration, which involves painting, a painstaking

replication of the elaborate ceiling, and other restorative touches, should be completed by November. In 2001, the depot will again serve rail passengers, when the **Trinity Railway Express** begins a daily run between Fort Worth and Dallas. Call 817/332-2972.

BIG D DEBUTS

Dallasites recently christened a couple of attractions: a new visitor information center in historic "Old Red," the renovated 1892 building that once housed the Dallas County courthouse, and an endangered-tiger exhibit at the Dallas Zoo.

The **Dallas Visitor Information Center**, 100 South Houston Street at Dealey Plaza, brings ultramodern technology to its new location. Eight touch-

COURTESY DALLAS ZOO, © ROBERT CABELLO



Paul the Sumatran tiger has set up residence at the Dallas Zoo's new Endangered Tiger Habitat.

screen kiosks provide instantaneous information on the city's sites, sights, lodging, and restaurants, as well as maps that you can print out and take along. At an "Internet cafe," you can retrieve or send email with the swipe of a credit card. Write to 100 South Houston, Dallas 75202; 800/CDALLAS or 214/571-1300. Web site: www.dallascvb.com.

Sumatran tigers Sasha and Paul have taken up residence at the **Dallas Zoo**, at 650 South R.L. Thornton Freeway

(Interstate 35 East). Built to house up to 10 Sumatran and Indochinese tigers, the **Exxon Endangered Tiger Habitat** simulates the animals' natural surroundings, with exotic grasses and pools. A breeding program will help preserve these creatures. The cats join the zoo's 1,800 other animals, representing 370 species. Write to 650 South R.L. Thornton Freeway, Dallas 75203; 214/670-5656 (recording). Web site: www.dallas-zoo.org.

A STAY BY THE LAKE

Lake Fayette, long a favorite of bass fishermen, now offers lakeside cabins for overnight stays at **Oak Thicket Park**, just off Texas 159, about seven miles west of **Fayetteville**. The wide range of accommodations (some with kitchenettes) includes one- and two-bedroom facilities, hotel-style rooms, and large bunkhouses that can sleep as many as 14 guests. Prices range from \$65 to \$135 per night. The park also offers screened shelters (\$26 per night) and full hook-up RV sites (\$16 per night). You'll also find three fishing piers, two boat docks, two nature trails, a swimming area with a beach, and picnic tables with grills. For information, including details on day-use park entry fees, write to 4819 West State Highway 159, Fayetteville 78940. For reservations, call 512/389-8900 from 9-6 weekdays.

Down the Road

In August, we'll focus on lunar lore with a story on moon-gazing, then zoom in on the musical stars on *Austin City Limits'* stage. We'll fill you in on Fredericksburg's founder, John O. Meusebach, and delve into some truly devilish Texas locales.

WINDOW ON TEXAS

© LAURENCE PARENT



Early-morning sunlight bathes colorful shrimp boats moored in Freeport's placid harbor. Shrimp comprise more than 75 percent of Texas' commercial fishing haul each year.

